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VERSE AND STORY

BY

FLORENCE V. BRITTINGHAM

CHARLES WELLS MOULTON

BUFFALO

1892

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By JACOB BRITTINGHAM.

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THIS LITTLE WORK

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

TO MY SON

PHILIP SHEARER BRITTINGHAM

FOR WHOM I CAN ASK NO GREATER BLESSING

THAN

THAT THESE PAGES

MAY HELP HIM TO BE WHAT HIS MOTHER WAS:

PURE, GENTLE and DILIGENT

IN THE SERVICE OF

GOD

AND MAN.

PREFACE.

This volume is compiled at the solicitation of friends and for a dear little son, who will highly appreciate in future years the words of his devoted mother. He will also value, as will all her friends, the glimpse of a noble life and the tribute to a blessed memory, which the Bishop of West Virginia has added to its pages. The book makes no special pretentions and hence its title Verse and Story. It was written as a recreation and a relief for an active mind, and it is but just to add that such of her work as has not been previously published is taken directly from the original draft of the author without alteration or correction.

Mrs. Brittingham took particular delight in literature and met with some success in writing for various periodicals, yet she was too much occupied with the "Father's business" and the pressing duties of home-life to do full justice to her literary efforts. She loved song well, but souls better, and her feet were too often turned toward the home of the humble to visit frequently that of the muses. The "Old, Old Story"

was so real in her life that she seemed to have little time to write mere words of fiction. She made up in intensity of life for length of days.

"God breathed a soul into a human form,
Endowed it richly with rare gifts;
The artist's touch, the poet's song,
The power to wake sweet melody—
All these were hers.
Thus fit to shine in Fashion's realm,
She meekly chose the 'better part,'
And passed all undefiled along the way,
To soothe and cheer the desolate,
And help to higher, nobler life
By her own spotless purity.
Death touched her and she slept
To wake in deathless joy
In Paradise."

JACOB BRITTINGHAM.

St. Luke's Rectory, Wheeling, W. Va.
Eastertide, 1892.

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MEMOIR.

FLORENCE SHEARER BRITTINGHAM.

IT was in the summer of 1878, on the occasion of my first official visit to Emmanuel Church, Moorefield, Va., that I met Florence Shearer then in her 22nd year.

In the busy life I have since led, it has been a constant pleasure to me to meet her when I made my annual visits to Moorefield, and to Clarksburg and Wheeling, W. Va., where she afterwards lived. But I cherish, with special feelings of interest and tenderness, the recollection of how she passed the first year of her married life, as a member of my own household, in Parkersburg, W. Va. And yet, notwithstanding the long, and I may say familiar intercourse of these years, of which I have a very distinct impression and a most fragrant memory, it is with great hesitation that I put my pen to paper to attempt to convey in anywise to others what are my own thoughts about this dear woman, who we believe now rests in the Paradise of God. In our long association with our friends we are not accustomed to formulate our

thoughts and feelings about them, and so, when in the providence of God they are taken from us, we are not, at once, ready to tell to others what they have been to us and what we believe they have been in their own distinct personality, and in their work for, and association with, other people.

After we have said all that comes in our minds to say, we feel that the picture we present is a very imperfect one; we realize its defects though we may not be able to supply what is lacking. We can state the main facts of the life, and draw the general features of the character, but the subtle charm of the presence and of the expression is often still wanting. No one else can read between the lines of what we have written, and therefore our words do not convey to others just what is in our own minds. After all our efforts, therefore, we have to be satisfied with an incomplete, partial and defective sketch, and we may well hesitate to put it before the public as a fair expression of our own appreciation.

Florence Virginia, daughter of Philip T. and Susan M. Shearer, was the eldest of five children, and was born in Moorefield, Va., on the 15th of November, 1856.

Mr. Shearer came from Winchester, Va., nearly forty years ago, and settled in Moorefield, where he still lives a highly respected citizen and a successful merchant. Mrs. Shearer's maiden name was Harness,

a family well known from the earliest settlement of the South-Branch Valley.

There is not much incident to be looked for during the first years of a child's life in a quiet little inland town like Moorefield, which nestling under the mountains in its beautiful valley, seems shut out from the restlessness and turmoil of the great, busy world.

Here Florence was reared with such surroundings and associations as marked a quiet Christian home. But her friends now delight to recall how, even in her early childhood, she showed the marked characteristics which adorned her after life. Her affectionate disposition in her family and to her little friends, and her cheerful obedience to all in authority, are gratefully remembered by everyone who knew her as a child.

No doubt, like other children, she must have had her trials, but it is not too much to say that, even then, her character was marked by a singular sweetness of temper, in the exercise of which she constantly showed herself kind and generous to her playmates and more than usually ready to pass over any unkind word or action.

As a complement to this temper of singular sweetness, was her simple and transparent truthfulness, not only in word but in deed; what we may call the beautiful integrity of her character, which, showing itself from the time that she could know right from wrong,

inspired the utmost confidence in all who came to know her.

Another marked characteristic which distinguished her through life appeared also in these early years, the spirit of helpfulness for others. When only in her fourth year, she taught the little colored children, who were about her own home, the Lord's Prayer, and the "Now I lay me down to sleep," and when a little older, being between nine and ten years of age, and able to read correctly and easily, she used to make long visits to her grandmother's in the country, and read the Bible to such of the old servants as remained after the war. When other children would have been occupied in play, she would teach these willing scholars hymns and instruct them in the Bible. It is no wonder they loved the dear child, who thus tried to help them to a higher life, with a sincere and simple devotion, and this they expressed by calling her "their little angel."

To recall even these few simple things from her early childhood, is a grateful task to her friends, and to those who did not know her may serve as some guide to the appreciation of her subsequent life.

In the fall of 1871, when nearly fourteen years of age, Florence Shearer was entered as a pupil in the Eclectic Institute, Baltimore, Md., where she remained for three years under the care and tuition of Mrs. Letitia Tyler Semple, the principal. During these years

she enjoyed the full confidence and affection of Mrs. Semple and her assistant teachers. As the result of her school career, she returned to her home in Moorefield "with a necklace of medals around her throat and a diploma in her hand."

Mrs. Semple says of her that she set "an example of obedience, fidelity and earnestness of purpose to all around her," and that "in all the three years, she received but one demerit from any of her teachers."

While at school in Baltimore, Florence attended Emmanuel Church, then under charge of Dr. Randolph, now Bishop Randolph, of Virginia. She was presented by him for confirmation during her last year at school, and always spoke gratefully of his careful and thorough instruction and of the help she received from him as her pastor. Under such training she became not only a staunch but an unusually well informed Episcopalian, showing wonderful familiarity with the History, Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of the Church she so dearly loved.

This ardent and intelligent attachment to the Church of her choice, received abundant illustration in her life in Moorefield, from 1874, on her return from school, to 1882, the date of her marriage, a period of eight years.

The story of these years of quiet, patient, judicious and earnest work for Christ and the Church, remain yet to be told. I am not sufficiently familiar with the

details to attempt it myself; suffice it here to say that by the gift of a considerable body of land, our few church people in Moorefield were encouraged to organize a parish and to undertake to build a Church.

The difficulties in the way, however, were very great; and in all fairness and charity it must also be said that the prejudices against the Episcopal Church were very strong. The little band of our church people, some of whom have now gone to their rest, labored on with zeal and perseverance and by the blessing of God were enabled at last to have a home of their own, and worship in a beautiful church, which I consecrated for them, free of all debt, to the service and worship of Almighty God. Much might be said and much ought to be said of that small but devoted band, but I always found that by common consent, the foremost place of influence and effective power was given to the gentle and earnest spirit of Florence Shearer. In the choir, in the Sunday school, in every department of church work in which her service would tell, it was freely given, and her pure and sweet influence throughout the community was in every movement felt to be the power behind the throne.

On the 5th of September, 1882, it was my privilege to officiate at the wedding of Florence with the Rev. Jacob Brittingham, a Presbyter of the Diocese of West Virginia, having charge of various churches and missions in the neighborhood of Parkersburg and resident at

my own house in that city. Here she lived about a year and from this time my closer acquaintance with Mrs. Brittingham dates. She quickly won her way to the hearts of everyone of my household and we all felt her loss very keenly when Mr. Brittingham moved to Clarksburg, having been placed in charge of Christ Church. While in Parkersburg, Mrs. Brittingham was a very active member of the congregation. In the Sunday School, the Industrial Mission School and the Mother's Mission, she found objects for sympathy and room for work and the parish has long felt the inspiration of her example. The dates of her poems show that her literary activity begun while living at my house. We were not aware at the time that she was doing such work, though we could not but recognize her rare and graceful culture ; for her writing, whether of prose or verse, was with her rather a rest and pastime. The main purpose of her life was ever her "Master's business."

It was thus during the busy days of her married life, when many household and parish duties claimed her thought and energies, and especially during the short visits that she would make to the old home in Moorefield, that she found recreation and relief for an active mind in writing short stories and poems, and articles of one sort or another. Some of these have already found their way into print and some are now published, for the first time, in this volume.

The pastorate of Mr. Brittingham in Clarksburg, extended over a period of about six years and was a time of steady growth — a marked epoch in its history. To this faithful and successful work of my dear Brother, his wife, who was in every way a help-meet for him, contributed very largely. The church in Clarksburg owes a great deal to Mrs. Brittingham. To labors similar to those of which I have spoken as employing her time in Parkersburg, she added the work of a Bible class for young men which afterwards developed into a large class of both sexes — married or single. For this, her qualifications both of head and heart were exceptional. Those whose privilege it was to attend this class gratefully remember her clear and faithful Bible teaching, and recall with constant pleasure the charm of her gracious presence. In addition to church work and Bible-teaching, she also instructed a class of young ladies in English Literature and French, and was always active in advancing literary culture in this and other communities in which she lived. But it ought to be said that Mrs. Brittingham was not one of those persons whose energies are altogether expended outside of her own home. On the contrary, in that house as in the parish, her thoughtfulness and helpfulness were apparent. Naturally self-reliant she had after graduation preferred to make her own pocket and church money ; this she did by teaching and other work. The experience she

thus gained was invaluable to her in her married life. Not only did she manage her household affairs with wise discretion, with due regard to a limited salary paid her husband by the church in Clarksburg, but by her indefatigable industry she made it possible to furnish for the most part the Rectory of St. Luke's Church, Wheeling, (where Mr. Brittingham moved in 1889) and to put it in its present comfortable condition. Her idea was to make it "parish-worthy" to use her own words.

In St. Luke's parish she organized a circle of King's Daughters, and also had a Bible class for young ladies which met at the Rectory every Saturday night.

To be an organizer and leader in such work she was eminently fitted, because, to use the words applied to Frances Ridley Havergal, "she had such transparent candor, such delicacy of conscience, such strength of affection and will, such thoughtfulness of others, such forgetfulness of self."

We are not, however, to suppose that Mrs. Brittingham's energies were limited by the bounds of the parish where she lived. As an illustration of her wider sympathy, it deserves to be mentioned that she organized a branch of the Woman's Auxiliary in Clarksburg, certainly among the first in the Dioceses. In St. Luke's, Wheeling, she effected such an organization, the first of its kind in the city.

Miss Emory writes of her: "We, in the Woman's

Auxiliary, are great losers by the death of Mrs. Brittingham. It was always a pleasure to hear from her; her interest was so true and her wish to help so ready. I cannot but feel that, even beyond her own home and the limits of the parish, she must be missed indeed. But if the loss is felt, the influence must be felt too, and when such are taken it seems as though it must remain with those who are left to do better service than heretofore."

It was the very earnest desire of myself, and of my household, to have Mrs. Brittingham come to Parkersburg on the occasion of the meeting of the Fourteenth Annual Council, which was fixed for Wednesday, June, 3rd, 1891.

To make sure of it I began to make arrangements long before and it was understood that both she and her little son Philip would come with Mr. Brittingham and stay with me at the old home. So we planned, and for months looked forward to what we all thought would be a happy reunion; but it was not to be. On Sunday April 26th, 1891, at half-past eleven at night, her pure spirit took its flight from this world. "The silver chord was loosed, the golden bowl was broken," the precious dust was ready to return to the earth as it was, while the spirit sprang unto God who gave it.

On Sunday March 22nd, being the Sunday before Easter, I visited St. Luke's Church in the evening and took tea at the Rectory. I did not, however, see Mrs.

Brittingham as she was reported indisposed for several days. It was thought that she might be entering upon an attack of the prevalent "Grippe" and it was hoped in a few days she would be better. It turned out to be the beginning of the typhoid fever, which after thirty-nine long and weary days did its fatal work. Throughout her sickness she was calm and patient and up to the last two days her mind was perfectly clear. She realized that she was seriously sick and calmly spoke of the probability of death and said she had no fears. It was because "she knew whom she had believed and was persuaded that He was able to keep that she had committed to Him."

When, on the afternoon of the thirty-seventh day delirium seized her, there was nothing distressing about it. Her mind naturally wandered through scenes and among subjects most familiar to her. She went through some of the Evening Prayer and then repeated the first lines of several of the familiar evening hymns. She then breathed out her desires and aspirations to God in words of her own choosing. On Sunday morning, her last day on earth, she seemed to be a little better and her mind was clear enough to recognize all the members of the family who were gathered around her, making cheerful and even playful recognition of their presence. At eleven o'clock she listened attentively to the prayers her husband read by her bed-side, distinctly joining in repeating the

Lord's Prayer. From this time on she had little to say; indeed she soon dropped into an unconscious condition which continued to the end.

I need not say that everything that loving friends and skillful physicians could do for her, was done. Her faithful and devoted brother, Dr. Philip T. Shearer (who was Health Officer of the City of Wheeling, and died of the same terrible disease six weeks later)and another physician were in constant attendance. But, He who is too wise to err and too good to be unkind, seeing all with a clearer vision than that granted to our dim eyes, found that it was "better for her to depart and to be with Christ." Shall we not say "even so Father for so it seemed good in thy sight."

And now my grateful task is done. I have attempted to write a brief sketch and not a eulogy of my dear friend. These few lines may serve to recall her gracious presence to those who knew her and give to others some idea of what they can never, in this way, fully know, how sweet, pure, gentle and full of blessing was the life we have lost for a little while from our more active fellowship.

It will not be thought improper I trust for me to say in conclusion that I count it one of the chief pleasures and privileges of these latter days of my life, that I enjoyed the acquaintance and friendship of Florence Brittingham. The remembrance of all our association is sweet and I doubt not will remain green and fragant in

the years that are to come. I shall always think of her as

"A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort and command,
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light."

RT. REV. GEORGE W. PETERKIN D. D.
Bishop of West Virginia.

Parkersburgh, W. Va., Feb. 25th, 1892.

POEMS.

MY FRIEND.

A seedling by the wayside lay,
Escaping note from day to day;
Then came a careful hand and true
Who planted; and there it grew
To be a spreading tree, full high,
Dispensing good both far and nigh.

—Parkersburg, 31 October, 1882.

EIGHTEEN EIGHTY-SEVEN.

BY the clock I am told 'tis eleven,
And the spirit of this Christmas-even
Now enters my heart with its cheer,
To retrospect calmly the year
Of Eighteen Eighty-Seven.

However so nobly we've striven,
With motives all sanctioned by Heaven,
Some lurking and taunting regret
Will torture and cumber us yet,
Oh Eighteen Eighty-Seven!

By what e'er our hearts may be riven,
One guerdon is never deceiving—
To revel in memories of friends
Whom prompt recollection now blends
With Eighteen Eighty-Seven.

'Tis wisely and rightfully given
That some of this happiness leaven,

Should mingle its "couleur de rose"
With thoughts that hallow the close
Of Eighteen Eighty-Seven.

May the Christ whom we both believe in,
To have aided our effort at living,
That the leaf which is now folded down,
May hold in reserve a bright crown
For Eighteen Eighty-Seven.

—*Clarksburg, Xmastide, 1887.*

TO N. E. 1888.

A MERRY, merry bird,
A stranger to the bough,
Has risen phoenix-like
From one who died just now.

His song is rich and clear
As any bird of Spring,
By intuition fine
I know him swift of wing.

A bird of passage he
Whose coming none could stay,
He'll for awhile abide
Then wing his flight away.

The secret of his song
The wisest cannot tell ;
A chant for every day,
And every month as well.

There'll be some notes of woe,
And many trills of joy;
Dispair will have its tones
And love, without alloy.

But as the hours roll by
Within the coming year,
The warbler's mystic chime
Deciphered will be clear.

O birdie! sing for us
A song of hope renewed,
Of faith divinely blessed,
And sanctifying good.

So shall thy notes with ours
Harmoniously blend,
While not a discord mars
The year unto its end.

OCTOBER.

SOME days there are with happiness inwrought;
Fair nature whispers love, and high o'er-fraught
With blessings from her store, the laughing hours
Glid gently by and free disburse in showers
Such keen delights as mortals never know,
Except when rare October's sunsets glow.

T'is then the river finds its lulling tone;
The wind, enfranchised from the dreary moan,
Sinks to a zephyr soft, who's guileless play
Scarce tips the daisy 'long the king's highway.
The flowers the poppy's secret sure have found;
T'is natures dream not yet in slumber drowned.

The heavens bend nearer, earth is now so fair;
Vast multitudes of sprites from upper air
Descend and their sweet ministry intrude;
They league with frost-elves in the lichened wood,
Lay fructifying touch on forest grape,
While glebe-land with discol'ring fringe they drape.

Heap high the bonfire of Time's gloomy days,
And with ascending smoke the heavens o'er haze;
Veil with the same the sun's autumnal heat;
By river path romantic tales repeat,
Then join creation in its glad refrain,
Cheat death of all its semblance, all its pain.

CONFIDENCES.

THE flowers have whispered a secret
Which gossiping winds cannot know;
E'en zephyrs were still by vale and hill,
As I bent my ear quite low.

The news joy-giving now slumbered deep,
Close locked in my bosom true;

There is not one shall know what was done,
I vow, by my troth, save you.

T'was my lover came for me last night,
And lingered near the gate;
I would not come so he hied him home,
When the clanging hour spoke late.

With loitering step and longing eyes,
He dallied round the place;
"He'd wait for hours," he sighed to the flowers,
"Just to see her bonny face."

Now that I know my lover is true,
I shall saunter down to-night,
And if he be near the gate-way tree,
I to him my faith will plight.

If all transpire as I'm sure it will,
The happiest maid I'll be;
I'll build some bowers to honor the flowers,
Who the secret kept for me.

—*June, 1888.*

GAUDEAMUS IGITUR.

THERE are those who grow prosaic
Mid this fleeting life of ours,
As they trace a dull mosaic
Unrelieved by glint of flowers.

I, mayhap, some gleesome spirit,
Dowered with a brighter range,
Do but cross their path, or near it;
From without the fret and change

Of the bounding life around them,
They will stop to sneer and frown,
And from favored heights beyond them
Seek to drag the blest one down.

But we thank our God devoutly,
There are others in the race
Who will wield the cudgel stoutly
For the higher-up in place.

Those who will promote the welfare
Of the neighbor living by,
Tho' it be no prime advantage
To the potentate called I.

Then just let the gruesome shadows,
Journey on abreast the clay,
But we'll join the nobler army —
Those who brighten up the way.

—*July 6th, 1888.*

AFTER-GLOW.

BY radiant beams the western hill is aureoled;
Dense folds of gray
Veil now the form, erstwhile so animate,
Of sun-born day.

From out his glorious, iridescent home,
He, nature's priest,
Sends forth his hallowing, canonizing power
For day deceased.

Afar above the gloaming's darkening tints,
The sainted one
Gleams bright and reassuring glances down
The earth upon.

We, down among the shadows, hearts a-throb
And, trembling so,
Forget a restoration till we list
The after-glow.

When dies the day within the human soul;
When clouds of grief
Veil from our sight the frail weak frame of clay—
Nowhere relief,

We, down among the shadows, sink o'er-whelmed,
Unless we turn
The eye of faith to where the Eternal Son
Doth ceaseless burn.

The aureole of good deeds, touched by one ray
From Source Divine,
Transformed, becomes a glorious crown, which shall
Forever shine.

—*July 26th, 1888.*

ONLY AN INCIDENT.

OH! a day of wild merriment, frolic and fun,
Was the tournament day, and I think every one
In the shade of the grove on the broad-backed plateau,
Felt a fine flow of spirits, all faces aglow
With those sentiments grand, of love's chivalry born,
Which may even the brow of the humblest adorn.

The excitement of struggle and contest was past,
And the trumpeter brash, with stentorian blast,
Roused the slumbering echoes anear and afar,
As the knights in response to the summons of war,
Now forsook the sham battle of lances and steeds
To essay an old path which to danger oft leads.

'Tis the time when each knight who success can declare,
Must elect a fair partner his honors to share;
While most keenly elert and vivacious are they
Who are certainly passé a year and a day;
Those naive little maids, some of whom will be asked,
Have their countenances in indifference masked.

The brave Knight o' Gude Luck who crowns Beauty
as Queen,
Is as fine gallant youth as you ever have seen;
He directly advances (not caring who knows)
To a lassie whose cheeks flame with *couleur de rose*,
While quite carelessly toying with ribbon and plume,
He manœuvres a whisper, tones foreign to gloom.

"With your consent, the honor on you I'll confer."
"Oh! thank you," she said, "but I always prefer
That I the honor bestow." Her proud flashing eye
His awkwardness fully revealed. Passing on by,
'Twas another fair maid by a courtly speech caught,
Whom the knight crowned with grace not innate but
love-taught.

Moorefield, August 14th, 1888.

THE COMING OF THE STORM.

ALL day the errant winds had sped
Throughout the valley's length,
To summon laggard vapors hence
To swell the cloud-world's strength.
Now grandly marched thro' evening's gates,
In panoply of war,
The armies of the dread Storm King,
Collected from afar.

The distant boom to earth revealed
The coming of the foe;
The aspen leaves their faces hid
As overcome with woe;
The tallest trees 'gan signalling,
Nodded the flowers the alarm;
T'was telegraphed the valley through
Those glories couch'd some harm.

The glittering warriors of the west
And sober veterans gray,

Who hail'd from eastern homes and haunts
To mingle in the fray,
Their allied forces now combin'd
Hard by the zenith's throne,
And swore a mischief-brewing pack,
In surly undertone.

Now flashed the gleaming pennon forth,
Standard of all the clan,
The sight of whose bright blazonry
Appals the heart of man.
To brave defence and safe retreat
The leaguered worldlings swarm,
In solemn hush, with bated breath
The earth awaits the storm.

Moorefield, August 25th, 1888.

CHROMATIC.

CUPID, the God of Love, was blind,
So all ancient legends declare,
But time, with miraculous touch,
Has made him in progress to share
By dow'ring his long sightless eyes
With vision perceptive and rare.

Dame Nature, aghast and in rage
That any should insinuate
A defect or a foible in work
Acknowledged supremely create,
Takes ample revenge and afflicts
With chromatism Cupid elate.

Now, though he no longer is blind,
The crystalline lens, wrong-fashioned,
Invests with all beautiful hues
Each object of love impassioned.
This most abnormal condition
Gives rise, oftentimes, to clashing.

The friends of a lover mislead,
For his weal no longer can act,
For he, were his sweetheart the worst,
A very virago, in fact,—
He'd think of her angelic-wise,
And vow her a seraph exact.

Within this queer chromatic realm,
A shrew for a lovely maid goes,
A girl with no blazon at all
Heraldic insignia shows;
The world topsy-turvy turned is
To suit the caprice of the beaux.

—*Clarksburgh, 1888.*

NATURE'S THIRD HEIRESS.

HIE hither, ye nymphs and ye naiads,
Embowered in Summer's green!
From the shade of the hill, the sylvan-arched rill,
The depths of the pines with the echos a-thrill,
From verdure-bound lakes where the wavelets are still,
Hie hither! Sweet Autumn has come.

She came on the beams of the morning,
Her car by butterflies sped;
Her beautiful face with a magical grace
Beam'd bright as she regally stepped to the place
Where handmaids of nature their trophies enlaced,
To honor the newly-crowned head.

Her raiment with color is glowing,
Of the filmiest cobwebs spun,
Where the rainbow hues of the glittering dews
Lie cunningly prisoned, the cleverest ruse,
To ensnare those obdurate hearts which refuse
Their homage, tho' rightfully won.

Her coming all beauty enhances,
For far o'er land and o'er sea,
There steals a soft haze down the glamouring daze,
While the foliaged forest through all of its ways
Is waving her colors and setting ablaze
The leaves on many a tree.

The glorious tints on the mountain
Atone for the valleys brown;
The shimmering screen o'er the meadows dark green,
Sifts the changeable light abroad the fair scene;
E'en the dropping of nuts the close boughs between
Makes music the wide world 'round.

Then come, let's enthrone the Autumn,
And drain the wild cup of mirth;
For what do we care for the locust boughs bare,
Or the nipping of frost in the "eager air,"
When we herald the reign of a queen so fair,
Whose bounties enrich the earth.

—1888.

AN AWAKEING.

I HAVE honestly tried to love her,
But I really never can;
The one thing now is to tell her,
Let her glances the pages scan
That reveal my soul most completely
In its soberly Plato-guise,
Where the fiery zeal of the lover
Has never yet had its rise.

My books and my work and my studies,
Have crowded completely out
Those sentiment shades of feeling,
Some men cannot do without.
I'll picture the case so consoling,
That she through her tears can descry
The form of some future adorer,
A fellow far better than I.

Of course there'll be weeping—the darling!
Well! Williams, a letter for me?

All daintly perfumed and written
In characters firm and free.
And this? That she'll faithfully promise
The same future friend to prove,
As of late, where hallowing mem'ries
Embalm her sisterly love.

She sends me a card to her wedding—
Ye saints! that's what I call cool.
To think I've been duped by a woman
Just like any other young fool.
No!—I well know the reason she did it,
(The fact that she loves me is plain,)
'Twas such a temptation to jilt me,
The truth is, she could't refrain.

I dallied too long on the border
Of Hymen-enchanted land,
While she with this other companion
Has entered hand in hand.
Hark! far thro' the clustering bowers,
The pealing of marriage-bell;
Ah me! that I ever should write it,
My heart re-echoes a knell.

—*September 13th, 1888.*

EQUIPOISE.

THE rains and the mists never cease,
The waters assuage and increase,
On earth there is never a day,
But moisture is called into play;
The dew-sprinkled sod,
The spray-leaguered shore,
The cloud-hooded mount,
The bog-fettered moor,
Attest well the vapor king's sway.

The sun never halts in his course,
Light from time can never divorce,
On earth there is never a day
But brilliance and splendor display;
The light-nourished plant,
The ray-crested morn,
The eve's radiant glow,
In a sun-castle born,
Are beauties no one would gainsay.

This earth is a wonderful home,
Where radiance and shadow both roam,
The glare by the gloom is toned down,
By contrast all beauties abound;
The picture is made
By light and by shade,
The cloud-world must temper
The sun-burnished blade,
Whose fierceness all nature might wound.

The heart has its sighs and its tears,
Poor blighted hopes lie on their biers,
Thro' life there is never a year
Whose firmament always is clear;
The sorrow-draped home,
The envy-pierced name,
The wreck of a life
By false lights a-flame,
Make wailing disconsolate, drear.

But happiness surges in power,
And mirth crowns a jovial hour,
We never live through a whole year
But musical chords greet the ear;

Sweet smiles tell of joy,
And closed finger tips
Expand all too eager
To press to the lips
The full cup of gladness and cheer.

The heart is a wonderful home,
Which God does in mercy o'er-dome
With clouds of adversity dark,
Gilt-lined by a faith-kindled spark;
A life of great worth
An excellence rare,
Diversified is
By touches of care,
The pleasure-strewn pathway to mark.

—*September 19th, 1888.*

COMPENSATION.

UPON the swelling bosom of the lawn,
There grew in verdure, beauty, strength and pride,
Three stalwart trees, their branches spreading wide
To sift the light in many a varied form.

We revelled in their fresh'ning shade the while
The shriv'ling grass grew bronzed with summer heat;
The merry breezes loved their own to greet
Amid the leafage rich in pleasure wile.

Perhaps we loved too well the shade-strewn park,
And by it were beguiled from duty's hest;
It may have been here pleasure led her quest
And failed the nobler things of life to hark.

For when one morn we trod the olden paths,
After a night of storm and lightning glare,
'Twas over prostrate forms up-rooted there,
All cradled like unto the reaper's swaths.

No consolation hovered 'round the slain,
But looking upward whence the bolt had come,
We gazed entranced at beauty's unveiled form,
And nature's self assuaged the recent pain.

'Twas full a fortnight later, as we fled
The rich effulgence of the noontide glow,
We idly stopped to note the copious blow
Besprinkling deep-hued grass erst well nigh dead.

Oh! this we felt was compensation meet
For loss of what at first we ill could spare,
To feast on flowers, to breathe a freer air,
Find wood and field invite our tardy feet.

Oh! ye who live o'ershadowed by great love,
Who rest all thoughtless of the world beyond,
Prepare ye now for when Euroclydon
Shall from your clinging grasp your guard remove.

And ye who downcast mourn and hopeless grieve
For reason that some treasurs are inurned,
Be ye assured sweet lessons can be learned,
Would ye but now accept the great reprieve.

—*Clarksburgh, October 12th, 1888.*

CHRISTMAS.

TO-DAY with importance is teeming,
The crown-fash'ning hand of the hour
Is busy empurpling the Present,
With royal insignia and power.

Rash mortals mislead by the pageant,
Vow willing submission to one
Who thralls them with witching devices,
And flits when her mission is done.

To-morrow, a foe to the Present,
Appropriates half of its dues,
Deceiving with Chateaux en Espagne,
Who tribute its false iris hues.

But once in the year is ordained,
That Present and Future must yield
Their rival and oft luckless sceptres
To one with the Conqueror's shield.

'Tis a child of the past, nobly royal,
A day ushered in by a star,—

The star of earth's hopes and vague longings,
In zenith at Bethlehem afar.

This day all ablaze with the glory,
From angelic robes and harps caught,
Has never forgotten the story
Enshrinèd and faithfully taught.

To chronicle vict'ry forever,
The signet on Time's page was set,
Where Christmas, within the year's margin,
Precludes e'en a chance to forget.

O wonderful, wonderful Christmas!
Thy glories can never be told,
Though Present and Future sway humbly,
To list "the sweet story of old."

As bells ring the music of Heaven,
While worshippers echo the strain,
Why doubt we that listening angels
Waft higher the dying refrain?

O wonderful, wonderful Christmas!
The thoughts from thy coming which spring,
Can never find perfect fruition,
Except in the courts of Our King.

—*Clarksburgh, 1888.*

A NEW YEAR VISION.

ANOTHER gate to-night op'ning upon
The great broad avenue of the glad New Year,
Now stands unhingèd that there be no feud
Unto the rush of countless myraids,
That soon will jostle through the severed bars.
I tremblingly draw near the mystic space
Wherein the mile-stones of man's race are set,
And while I search 'mong the fantastic lights—
Those future signal-lights swung dim as yet—
Search for some answer to my hopes and fears,
Lo! man, drawn swift upon the car of time,
Whose ponderous bell clangs twelve, enters the track
New-laid for Eighteen Hundred Eighty-nine.

Abreast the head-light, near this swaying train
Of human life, floats on gilded wing
Th' impersonation of the new born year.
Winter, in likeness to our Mother Church,
Waiting alike at birth and burial,
Receives with joy the newly born and crests

With icy baptism his glowing brow.
Thus, by disciplinary means is he
Created nature's doughty warrior;
And thus equipped he better able is
To cope with all the dalliance of the Spring,
The subtler influence of the Summer-time,
Or hazy witchery of the Autumn day.
Doubtless the veteran Winter broods the time
When just a twelve-month hence, this eager one
Shall finish an appointed course, and his
Must be the hand amid December's snows
To give a chaste and honored burial.

We who have traveled many times the round,
The ever circling, age-goaled round of years,
Who oft have hushed the requiem of the old
To join the chorused anthems of the new,
We eyried ones can pierce with magic ken,
The shadows of the nearing future life,
Before the now impatient train begins
Its fast and chequered move from hour to hour
Now stationed close throughout the coming year.

These are the revelations which we claim
Through pale Experience's glass; note, mark, digest,

For future reference. Earth's brightest things
The favorite targets are for death, disease,
Decay. Close scrutiny reveals at once
The piercèd heart through which the shaft went home;
A gleaming whiteness there is but a tomb,
The marble cut in character of love.
That distant glimmer wan bespeaks a watch
By sick or dying, birth or shrouded bier;
Within the darkest corner of the plain
Foul envy lurks couchant, to blast by guile
The reputation of yon passer-by.
The fairest garlands of the gay
Are nothing worth the following day;
Where wanton Pleasure holds her sway
There Misery casts her shadowy way.
But does no brightness 'lumine earth?
Can vast experience find no berth
For happiness and joy and mirth?

Oh! see ye where
A white-robed maiden glides thro' air,
Her mantle cinctured round with deeds
Whose every record calms and speeds
Broadcast towards the waiting hand

A thousand balms for grief-bound man.
'Tis Mercy followed close by Truth,
In semblance to a stalwart youth,
Whose firm and wrong-o'er-topping tread
Numbers all errors with the dead.
Peace, here and there, with sandalled feet,
Flits tirelessly, a paraclete,
While Love we meet at every turn,
By moor or fell, on mount or burn.
High over all, Hope's rainbow hues
Make fair the sky of life, where views
Domed o'er by clouds which erst were dark,
Now kindled by a vital spark,
Calm and revive the heart of man
And harmonize one wondrous plan.
So years and months and hours and days,
Each takes its turn and shapes its ways
To serve one purpose, great and high,
To be revealèd, bye and bye.

A MASTER TRAGEDIAN.

THE morning dawned on silent, mist-veiled earth,
The curtain drawn, to preparation due
For the approaching bloodless tragedy,
Bloodless, 'tis true, but not less harrowing;
For danger is the ruling element
In all the conclaves of the powers of air.

At the appointed time, the bluster wind
Rent swift (no time for histrionic art)
The low-hung drapery of shielding cloud.
Upon the landscape sketch, in black and white,
The stormhand came with all its clenchèd strength;
And who may tell the havoc focalized?
Those unresisting ones of nature's school
Swayed their lithe forms to let the storm pass by,
Or measured out their length upon the wold.
But look! Where man's opposing brick and frame
Looked vaunting forth but just an hour ago,
Now blackened sight and bandages required
To swathe them back to usefulness again.

No loss of human life! 'tis wonderful!
The God of mercy rideth on the storm.
But what of man's revenge for labor lost?
Ask of the scattered winds that now return
To soothe anew the fevered brow to peace.

O puny man! Thou'rt vanquished by a breath!
Thy pride is lowlier now than earth-sprawled vine,
Or than the buried grain's unconscious glow.
A miserere might'st thou sing each day,
Were there not compensations waiting where
Man's feeble powers may angels'. e'en eclipse,
In that bright Future past this Trial Time.

—*Clarksburgh, January 10th, 1889.*

"THY WILL BE DONE."

RESIGNED! We say it o'er and o'er;
No meaning does it bring,
Not e'en when grief, Time has in store,
Comes with its piercing sting,
Transfixing deep on heart and brain
A ceaseless, well-nigh blasting pain.

Resigned! The balm the word contains
Is granted to God's heroes,
Who find the iron mail of pain
Protects from gastly foes;
Those cunning foes of spirit frame
Whom naught can daunt but one dread Name.

Resigned! O, Jesus make us see
Thee mirrored in each scene,
That, shifting, meets our human sight
Each act of life between.
To blend the will with Thine, O Lord,
Attunes man's soul to Heaven's chord.

—Clarksburgh, January 14th, 1889.

RECEPTION.

THE pattering rain came down in play
Gleefully o'er the earth one day,
To find outstretched on taut-drawn line
A woven fabric, brilliant, fine.
With crystal edge and mocking tear
It drew the life-blood, darkly clear,
Skirmishing down in streaming flood,
The dye to seek its native wood,
Where color massed in pristine force
Learns harmony from nature's source.

But scarce a stone's cast yon away,
A comely blossom, brightly gay,
Received with waiting grace the shower,
And hurried quick to nuptial bower,
The drop whose added strength and power
Sustained the life of herb and flower;
That life which in the sultry heat,
But for the rain, had ceased to beat.

'Tis thus within the higher realm
When floods from Heaven do man o'erwhelm,
The soul deep-dyed in worldly art,
Which lives estranged from God apart,
Sends issuing forth a fetid stream
Where streaks of error darkly gleam;
Back to the circumstantial world
That soul's artistic grace is swirled,
The borrowed good which was its pride
Sails swiftly out on sorrow's tide.

But when the showers of grace inpour
Through Faith's high-portal'd, opening door,
The waiting Christly soul doth speed
To receive the draught as God decreed,
And send it pulsing thro' each vein
Until the quickened life attain
A stature, beauty, fragrance, zest,
Accounted of earth's good things,—best.

—Clarksburgh, February 20th, 1889.

LIFE.

RESTING one eve, close wrapped in musing plight,
I marked the play of fire on fresh-heaped coal,
So toilfully the flame-points polished bold
The dusky sides, until the glancing light
Told forth a master-piece, whose structure bright
Spoke bondage by a glowing power controlled.
Life's quivering flame-tongues thus at length made gold
From crude material mined in earthly night.
When fiercest life-heat can achieve no more
Than send its radiant image through each part,
Then slow o'er all there creeps a wid'ning score
Where Death writes "Finis" in the dust-lapsed heart.
But freed as smoke, from Life's residuum,
The soul in heights celestial finds its Home.

—Clarksburgh, February 24th, 1889.

THE WISDOM OF THE LILY.

A BUTTTERFLY wooed a blossom,
A lily stately and tall,
None else would suit the gay rover,
But Queen of the flowers all.
The twilight wooing was whispered to me
By gossiping Vesper from Windy-mere-lee.

"O suitor from regions of air,
My chosen thou never cans't be;
A clog to thy wings would I prove,
Nor yet coulds't thou dwell with me;
The union of winglets and rootlets can ne'er
Approved stand by any; so, kind friend, forbear."

My winglets no hinderance shall be;
To-night in Butterfly Hall
I clip off these vain adornments,
In presence of comrades all.
If only my bride, O Lily, you'll be,
You'll find I can dwell forever with thee.

"Surely you know," said the lily,
"The loss of your wings would be death;
Bend close, lest Vespers be stirring,
I'll whisper you under my breath—
A brilliant-winged princess has placed a light
In Honey-Moat Tower; so, dear friend, good-night!"

A rustle of wings thro' the gloaming
Announced the suitor had fled;
A wafting of delicate perfume,
The bending of pollen-crowned head;
Away through the foliage there trembled a gleam
Which ended forever a butterfly's dream.

I pondered me well the lesson
Carried by eaves-dropping wind,
While thinking that maidens and lovers
A wholesome rebuke might find;
While stripping the wings from ambition and pride
They force them with lowlier love to abide.

—*Clarksburgh, March 6th, 1889.*

ONE NIGHT'S LESSON.

THE outlined bough sketched dark on star-spiked zone,
Writes hieroglyphs, night's presence to condone;
The wingèd tenants of the upper air
Couch close in nestled homes, protected there;
The mystic rites of Nox are held on high,
And living creatures dare not venture nigh;
The reckless bat just skirts the hither edge,
Then swift his safety seeks by moor and sedge;
The drowsy hum of life hugs tight the earth,
To sleep hard by the clod whence sprang its birth;
Accompaniment to silence great nocturne
Finds consonance from peak to lowly bourn;
The stone-voiced stream, the sough of stricken air,
Feature the rustic night-scene everywhere.
The night of Death looms black, despairing, cold,
Life shrinks reluctant from the curtain-fold;
But cast adrift, beyond the portal light,
The spirit finds up in the sombre height,

Great gem-like promises glow through the dark,
Life's harmonies grow fuller as we mark,
'Tis nothing but a mountain crest doth hide
The light unfading on the farther side.

—Moorefield, June, 1889.

PYGMALION AND GALATEA.

PRISONED within the marble's veiling arm,
There slumbered long a shape of beauty born;
Walled solidly from peering human sight,
Until the hand of genius came to smight
The stony bonds.

Deftly and well the chisel's work was done,
Swiftly the yielding shackles, mallet-hewn,
Fell free, revealing to the artists eye
The mocking ideal of his dreams, whose shy
Sweet life he'd found.

But soft! the statue knows not motion, speech;
The lowliest man, the poor, the ignoble, each

Can boast an essence greater than the form
Which all possessing, still lacks one great charm—
The gift of soul.

Pygmalion knelt, his life staked on one hope,
His passion's being venting its full scope
In eager pleading prayer to mighty Jove
T'endow man's handiwork with soul and love,
To crown the whole.

The suit swift gained the ear of heaven's lord;
While god and goddess list the potent word,
The lovely Galatea blushed to live,
Stepped lightly down her wondering tryst to give
Pygmalion, joyed.

Morality the man-carved statue is
Prefigured in such olden myth as this;
She of the faultless, captivating pose
Who thralls her sculptor's heart, but knows
No vibrant chord,

And unresponsive must she ever be,
Unless the builder of her symmetry

Pray God to touch her with the spark divine,
To speed the Christly nature to combine
With human art.

No thing of greater beauty can be found
In all the boundless universe around,
Than human virtue blushing in its need,
Awaking to show forth by nobler deed,
The Christ-now heart

—*Moorefield, July, 1889.*

QUESTIONINGS.

MYSTERY waits upon life when it comes
New from the hand of its God;
Mystery veileth the humble head-stone
Where late the mourner hath trod;
Mystery! mystery! anguished we cry,
A mystery we live, a mystery we die.

Thoughtful or careless, as time passes on,
Questions profound will intrude;
Why is the soul uncongenial to mine
Forced in my shelter to hood?
Why must I take in my bosom to warm
The serpent whose rousing will do me most harm?

Why, when my volume of years that are past,
Sighing but thankful I shelf,
Malice must come, and, detaching the leaves,
Sell out my secrets for pelf?
Why should a stone-cast, from alien hand sped
Circle my life with an ominous dread?

Why do my plans parasite and entwine
  Close where my enemies stop,
So when the fruit of my labor matures,
  Cunning hands loosen the prop,
Trailing my honor, my pride, in the dust,
Leaving me pennance and suffering unjust?

Soul! wouldst thou know where the answers are writ?
  Not in the world's puzzling lore;
But sealèd for thee in the great book of life,
  Awaiting thy coming ashore,
Where eons on eons will scarce satisfy
Thy questions to meet with God's own reply.

—Moorefield, July 12th, 1889.

A LONGING.

O LET me die, before
The portals of the mind are clouded o'er,
Dimming the once keen vision of the occupant
And changing friend to foe in mocking jargonry.

Yes, let me die,
Before I lose the priceless power
To send the thrilling spirits of the hour
On missions born of thought; ere they
In tricksy guile and pageantry
Escape to torture me and those I love.

I fain would die,
Before I note the tear
Steal to the eye, which watching near,
Can naught express but pity, sorrow, fear;
And loved ones even flee the darkened tomb,
Where not a ray of reason lights the gloom,
Nor weeping Hope can aureole the doom.

O Father, let me die,
Unmarked by trace of earth's decay,
Ecstatic thus to pass away,
T' expand the spirit, soul and mind
In heights of love, now undefined,
Where Thou e'er dwellest with Thy ransomed kind.*

—*Wheeling, October 9th, 1889.*

TO DUTY WED.

WITH form so wearily drooping,
A maiden stood
In solitude,
Where the brook frets on to the ocean;
To false love her hearts been stooping,
The memory wakes emotion.

A formal farewell was resting
On bosom true,
Full loyal, too,

*The fourth verse of this poem was rewritten by Mrs. Brittingham two or three days before her serious and fatal illness.

While the writer far was roving;
'Tis hard with the heart protesting
To cure a wound made by loving.

Pathos wreathed in 'mong the tresses,
O'er brow so fair,
The ringlets there
Caress and Madonna the face;
Fine lashes conceal the distresses
A careless glance never will trace.

A bright-plumaged soarer swept by,
A bud of Spring
Touched by his wing
In beautiful curves fell swaying;
There was a touch of blossom far and nigh,
Where seedlets of Autumn were maying.

'Tis hardest when Spring is fledging
Her white winged germs,
To serve their terms
In blade, leaf, flower and fruiting,
'Tis hardest then to be wedging
In young life sorrow's sharp rooting.

But back in her home 'neath the willow,
To duty wed
Her life on sped,
Not far from the quaint old town,
Quite nigh to the stout white pillar,
Where they buried the first mile down.

Whene're now the Spring comes wooing
Each gossiping gale
To carry the tale
Of love in its thousand caprices;
She, pleasure the less persuing,
In struggle and toil never ceasing.

—*Moorefield, August, 1889.*

DEATH.

WHEN light, and heat, and toil, and din,
I found so wearying,
God's rest my soul o'ershadowing,
I sank to sleep therein.

—*Wheeling.*

THE HIGHER WISDOM.

I YEARNED to be useful,
My quick eager feet
Would bound thro' earth's highways
Each duty to meet.
But lo! in the noontide
Of life I became
A burden of burdens;
O, the grief and the shame!

I sought in my quenchless
Ambition to scale
Heights which no other
Dared even assail.
Yet God calmed my struggling,
An humble place gave;
Distilled for my comfort
His grace which saves.

I longed to o'ershadow
The children of fame,
To make all past toilers
But carvers of names.

Yet God made me follow
The lowliest there,
Then gave for my guerdon
The Spirit of prayer.

'Tis thus in my weakness
That I am made strong,
Born into the Truth,
Close girdled with song;
Glimpsing to wonder-heights
Undreamed of, unknown,
Yea, rising Heavenward,
Nearer the Throne.

—Wheeling, October 10th, 1889.

LOVE'S WISDOM.

NO, love, I came in the morning!
O, never at night with thee;
With stars your bright brow adorning
You sparkle but signals of warning
To pilot on Love's restless sea.

I never could bear the scorning
Which night's brilliant touches decree;
No, never such dire forlorning
For me.

The day is my friend, mad with glee
A jest it makes of my mourning;
The sunbeams a guard are to free
My worshiping heart, sweet, from thee
When night comes my soul suborning
I flee.

—*Wheeling, October 23rd, 1889.*

"BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL."

'TWAS a fearful day in the winter-time
The trees were bare and glum,
Their branches stretching helplessly
In sapless anguish dumb.

The dash of rain against the pane
At times would cause a start;
The roaring of the raging wind
Sent shivers through my heart.

In beaver clad there yonder passed
The rich man of the town,
The man whose iron coffers
With gold were weighted down.

While just behind with shoes patch-tiled
Shrank poverty's wan child,
She tried to shelter from the storm
Close to the magnate's screening form.

I, sash-upraised, called for the child
But the mocking tempest wild

Caught up my tones and murdered them,
And buried them in oblivion.

How glad I was to learn next morn
The rich man, mercy great,
Had blessed a struggling little life,
That fell outside his gate.

VÆ VICTIS.

A SHROUDED Fear came to my gate and knocked;
I bade him enter, trembling though I was,
Then stood on guard to grapple the dread guest.
But when in clearer light I scanned him o'er
I saw a conquered foe, slain yester-night,
In combat which, my heart's best blood had drawn.
I told him what he had not known before;
For him there is no resurection power,
Nor can he touch again my healèd heart,
Then driving him afar into the dark,
I stood once more, a Freeman, doubly free,
A victor over e'en the phantom Fear.

—*Wheeling, November 18th, 1889.*

BORN—DIED.

A WINTER'S DAY.

THE Day-God sped a love-tipped lance,
Which, quivering, sought the Snow-Maid's heart;
She, glowing from her chill night trance,
With love-light set the world advance
By tinting gay both dale and mart.

This bridal of the sun, perchance,
In Winter's jewelled dome apart,
Forecast the birth of Beauty's glance
In prismic art.

The snow-birds, festal-missioned, dart,
A vested choir; the thrill enhance,
And one where shades of evening start
Drank in the last cold tear—a smart
Of sorrow o'er Love's vast expanse—
Light's broken heart.

—*Wheeling.*

ONE SUMMER'S STORY.

ONE little form we laid away to rest,
In years but two,
'Mid the tall grasses, in a daisy-nest,
Fresh pearled with dew.

Scarce had the anthem died upon the air,
Earth's cradle song;
Scarce had the echoes ceased weird revel there,
The mounds among,

When lo! the heart-dirge in Grief's minor key
Changed quick, to swell
Into the sweeping chords of joy, whose tones
Subduing fell.

For where a few short hours ago there slept
Th' eternal sleep,
A silent baby form, now lies warm-wrapped
And breathing deep.

A newly born. His coming was well-timed.
New motherhood
Pines not in grief away; all is sublimed
And understood.

Yet seldom is it man is soothed, the curse
So blissfulwise;
For never yet has eager bud-scale burst
'Neath deadly skies.

Just as the leaflets brown on Autumn's breast
Have sought repose,
Their flutter and their duty-shading guessed,
And solved, who knows?

'Twas life supplanting death, so swiftly tho'
That human thought
In wondrous awe forgets the anguish there
Which sorrow brought.

—1890.

QUATRAINS.

MUSIC.

MUSIC was born when chaos, darkness bound,
Freed by the touch of earth's magician—Light,
In melody its gratitude to sound,
Struck clear the key of joy in Heaven's height.

O music, sweet celestial! Pilgrim here,
We hold thee bound by stings nigh wizzard-skilled,
Yet never we thy spirit wed and share
Except by years of service, freely willed.

M usic is Life's best wine
Served in the chalice wrought by toil;
The draught elation brings
Without the woe of base recoil.

TO MY HUSBAND.

OLD Time has been telling a story
Of eight long years and a day,
When you and I first knew each other,
A wearisome time away.

Fair Gladness has rung out her changes
And Sorrow her notes prolonged,
Amid the years' records and ranges
Both sobbing and laughter are songed.

You miss the soft touch of a mother,
While I for a brother mourn;
Communion transmutes tears to jewels,
Loneliness turns them to stone.

While Christmas bells ring out so holy,
Subdued from their gladlier swell,
We'll rival Old Time in his story;
Of Life, not of Death, we will tell.

Within the great past-world's embraces
Our dead this blest Christmas-tide
Strike fuller and sweeter their anthems,
Not one jangling note to chide.

I'd fain catch the strain of their voices,
Will you not listen with me?
They'll teach us the gladness of sorrow,
They'll aid us Jesus to see.

—St. Luke's Rectory, Christmas, 1890.

TRIALS.

"TRIALS must and will befall"
But, brother, 'neath the heaviest pall
Comfort comes with nobler trend,
And peace, when trials have an end.

—Wheeling, November 18th. 1889.

BERWICK'S MISTAKE.

BERWICK'S MISTAKE.

CHAPTER I.

MADELEINE ON THE WAR-PATH.

"HEIGH! Berwick, wait for me. I'll join you in a minute."

The voice proceeded from an up-stairs window, and while the boy on the side-walk lingered waiting, from within, through the open windows, on that bright spring morning, could be heard sounds of a school-boy's hurry.

Harry Andrews, in his haste of course, snatched the wrong school satchel and did not discover until nearly to the front door that he was carrying off his little sister's property.

Back again he rushed, this time being more careful to secure his own satchel, and with a ringing "Good-bye, mamma, I'm off!" he finally joined Berwick in the street. Arm in arm the two boys walked slowly along to school, talking earnestly.

"I wanted to see you particularly this morning,

Berwick, to ask if you are going to join the military company."

"I am thinking very seriously of it," answered Berwick, "though I have not yet broached the subject at home. You know my mother and sister are foolishly nervous about me, and I am afraid to mention my desires in this matter until I have fortified myself to meet all possible objections. I want to have my reasons for joining the company so strong that they will overcome all opposition."

"I don't see why I always have to blurt out things so suddenly, because I often end by 'making a mess of it.' If I had acted with some deliberation perhaps papa would have given his consent; but as it is, his refusal has made me give up all idea of entering the company."

"Oh! Harry, I am so sorry. The more I think over it, the more anxious I am to join, and I had hoped you would be in the ranks too. Is your father's refusal decisive?"

"Yes," said Harry, and there was a tinge of keen disappointment in his tone entirely unlike its customary light-hearted ring.

"Perhaps he would change his mind if he knew I was to be one of the number," argued Berwick. "We have just passed his office. Shall I go back and coax him for you?"

"No, no!" Harry ejaculated with unnecessary haste

and emphasis. "The captain has pleaded my cause, so has Mary, though Mamma and Ida side with Papa. But when Papa refuses me after he has taken time for consideration, as he has in this matter, I know it is useless to continue to beg. No, my fate is sealed. I shall be an envious looker-on while the other boys enjoy the fun and the glory."

"But does your father give no reason for denying you this pleasure?"

"Yes, he has spoken of two, though he says there are others that influence him."

"What are the two"? asked Berwick. "He says," continued Harry slowly, "that an enterprize like this is apt to gather in the roughs of the town and he had rather I wouldn't be thrown with them. Also, that I ought not to enter any organization without being prepared for all its emergencies." "Your father is entirely too particular with you, Hal; suppose the town roughs are in the company, they can't harm us there any more than they can on the streets every day. I tell you boys have got to be tried as well as men, and the sooner we learn to 'hoe our own row,' the better for us." Then happening to think there was another reason given, Berwick continued: "but what duties could arise in the company that you or I could not discharge? What did he mean by emergencies?"

"Why," explained Harry, "he said there might be a sudden call for troops, and after consenting to my

enjoying the benefits of the company he could not conscientiously hinder me from sharing its dangers."

"Well! of all reasons in the world, that is the last I would have thought of. I don't suppose the nation can jump into war in a single night, and certainly if any evil of that kind threatens, minors would have plenty of time to withdraw. I am sorry, Harry, that your father's reasons do not influence me. I was hoping that for your sake I might find some creeping-out place."

Long before the conversation had reached this point, the boys had come to the school-house, but instead of joining the other boys at play, they stood at the gate talking. Any reply that Harry might have made was prevented by the school-bell, at whose first tap both boys bounded through the yard, forgetting all else in their eagerness to be the first in the school-room. While the recitations are in progress we will have time to find out some facts bearing upon the lives of these two boys; facts not deducible from the foregoing conversation.

Berwick Foster and Harry Andrews had been friends from early childhood, having grown up together in the little mountain village of Madeleine. As is so frequently the case in mutual friendships, the two boys were wholly unlike. Berwick, under proper home training, would have developed a sterling character; but unfortunately this essential of a well-balanced life was

lacking, for the boy in a measure had his own training in hand. At the time our story opens he was sixteen and phenomenally developed for a boy of that age. Being the only son of his mother, and she a widow—a widow with ample means, it is true, but a woman so weak and dependent that at the death of her husband, four years before, she had thrown all the family responsibility upon her twelve-year-old son—Berwick had matured rapidly, and in him resulted, unfortunately, a man's steadiness of purpose combined with a youth's unreasonableness and recklessness of consequences. Notwithstanding all her puerility of character, Mrs. Foster had gained a strong hold upon her son's affections and could always command his obedience; Perhaps this influence over him was born of her idolatry, and her extravagant ideas of his abilities, which were no secret to the boy.

The only other member of the family, except some valuable servants, was a crippled child, Berwick's sister Lucia, five years his junior. If such a thing was possible, the boy's affection for his afflicted sister exceeded his love for his mother. Whenever Mrs. Foster felt there was any doubt about gaining a cherished point, it might be a wrong one, she had only to ask the boy to do it for his sister's sake, and there was no further trouble.

Mr. Andrews knew Mrs. Foster well, being the lawyer in charge of her business, and he believed

that a boy trained, or rather untrained, by such a mother, was not a perfectly safe companion for his only son. In fact, he had always had his doubts about Berwick as a companion for Harry, not alone for the reason above given, but because the boy himself did not impress him favorably. However, having no good reason to give Harry for severing the intimacy, he could not bring himself to wound his son and take from him a chosen friend because of a mere suspicion. His own intuition might be at fault, he argued, and surely he ought to trust Harry's perceptions somewhat even though often a youth of fifteen may misplace his confidence. Harry knew that his father did not fully approve of Berwick, and he had striven by every means in his power to vindicate his friend's character; nevertheless he had that morning restrained Berwick's impulse to plead for him because he knew such intercession would avail him nothing.

In the midst of a gentle and lovely Christian home, Harry had developed naturally into a merry boy; his home influences were such that under the fun and boyish effervescence there was a solid stratum of genuine morality and Christian principle. While he was an object of devoted love to his mother, father and two sisters, yet they neither flattered nor pampered him, and so the moral atmosphere breathed by the two boys was, in most respects, wholly different. Having learned so much, we are now at liberty to

return to the village school, where just one incident is of interest as having some deciding influence upon Berwick's wavering resolutions on the military question.

Eager as he was to enlist, yet such was his affection for Harry that he shrank from engaging in anything so absorbing from which Harry would be excluded, so he determined to weigh the matter well before taking any step.

During a geometry recitation, a great over-grown lad was sent up to the board to demonstrate a problem. He proved himself but poorly prepared with the lesson, and the more he struggled with his task the more deeply did he compromise himself and display his ignorance of the subject in hand. At last the patience of the teacher was exhausted, and he said sharply: "It is plain, Bergan Warner, that you have been idling. This is the second recitation on which you have failed to-day. This morning I heard you boast that you would be the tallest of the new military company now forming and so would over-top all others. I tell you the day is past when brute force and blood and muscle win the day, and there is now no King Frederick to pay a royalty to giants. Brains and intrinsic worth are now the controlling forces, and if you show as great deficiency in your new undertaking as you have this morning displayed in your present field of labor, I can see no chance of promotion for

you, but only deep and deeper disgrace. Charles Morne will continue the demonstration."

The tone and words of the teacher had caught all ears, and as the crest-fallen boy retired to his seat, Berwick forgot him in the train of new ideas started by the master's closing words.

Promotion! The word roused all the ambition of Berwick's soul, and visions of a uniform with epaulets and badges of authority now presented themselves as among the possible futurities of his connection with the military company. If he had been wavering, he was so no longer ; he determined that very evening to gain his mother's consent and then publicly announce his intentions. So eager was he to know her views and to settle the paramount question that he "cut" a game of foot-ball to which he was pledged after school, and hurried home.

He found his mother and Lucia together, and diving at once into his subject he had soon laid the whole matter before them. Mrs. Foster saw that he had set his heart upon gaining her consent, and being ambitious for him and seeing no reason to forbid his being a soldier in a time of peace, she readily yielded to his solicitations.

Every obstacle removed from his pathway and seeing only encouragement to go his chosen road, Berwick hastened to report his enlistment and was enrolled as a member of the "Madeleine Guards," the youngest of the company.

I do not know whether we are justified in making a "vice versa" of the old saying, "large bodies move slowly," by putting it small corporations move quickly, but certainly it is that this miniature military enterprise had scarcely been fairly discussed by the gossips of Madeleine, before the glint of bright buttons was double-lining the windows with gazers, and the sound of "order arms" called the ubiquitous small boy to his post of open-mouthed admiration. Being a town without a railroad, hidden away among the mountains of one of our middle states, Madeleine welcomed any novelty and fostered any laudable undertaking advanced by the public-spirited. Therefore during the spring and early summer months of 1877, the "Guards" drilled and drilled until their proficiency and importance became an acknowledged factor of Madeleine every-day life, and the citizens began to think there could be nothing more cheering than the rat-a-tat-tat of the calling drum.

July, however, brought unexpected trouble, and the sleepy town opened wide its eyes over news brought by the mail coach of the marshalling of the militia of the Middle States to quell the "strikes" along the line of the B. & O. railroad.

The consternation in our little mountain fastness was increased when the captain announced to his company that as the "Guards" were regularly organized and supplied with uniforms, rifles and all other military

accoutrements, it was probable theirs would be the next summons and they must hold themselves in readiness for duty.

Sure enough early one sultry July morning a courier arrived with a dispatch from the Governor ordering "Madeleine Guards" to Lowchester, to assist in quelling a riot there. With the dispatch came the news that one of the militia from a sister town had been killed and four others wounded, so evidently the summons meant there was fighting and danger to face.

The majority were eager to go, the reluctant ones swallowed their chagrin, and all obeyed the Governor's mandate except four. In one case a substitute was procured whose father was unwilling he should act and raised such serious objections that the substitute was obliged to hide until the marching of the troops, when he came forth proudly and took his assigned place in the ranks. Another was sick, and the surgeon of the company was dispatched to investigate the case. He returned saying the man was really unfit for duty and must be excused. In the third case a father substituted his older for his younger son, pleading sickness for the latter. The fourth delinquent was Berwick Foster. Nothing could have surprised the community more than to hear that Berwick was acting a cowardly part. "What is the meaning of it?" "Is it true?" were questions being generally asked, and for answer we will

have to repair to the boy's home and see just how matters stood there.

Berwick was among the first to hear the news, and all excitement he rushed home and into the dining-room where his mother and sister were waiting his coming to begin the morning meal.

"Oh! Mother," he exclaimed, "our company is really going to fight. We have marching orders now."

"Why, my son," remonstrated Mrs. Foster, incredulous yet fearing, "are you bereft of your senses? You can not mean there is any call for active service. Explain yourself."

"You know, mother dear, we have been reading in the late papers of the strikes, and they have become so formidable that the troops are needed. Our special services are to be rendered at Lowchester and parts adjacent; so, mother, you must hurry and get me ready, as I suppose we will start in a few hours."

"You surely do not think of leaving us to go into such danger, do you, my son?"

"Why, mamma, there is no question about it. We have been ordered and we must obey."

"Obedience to parents is God's law, and man-made ordinances take a secondary place. You are a minor and I shall positively forbid your going, and shall also send a satisfactory message to your captain."

"Oh! mother," said Berwick turning pale, "you must not do that. Such a course would mean disgrace for me."

"Youths under age are never expected or compelled to serve, so no disgrace can attach to my refusal to let you go; and granting your view correct, what is disgrace in a paltry military company compared to your precious life? If my commands have no weight with you, let your afflicted sister's prayers and tears bring you to a right view of the matter."

Lucia had been crying silently ever since the conflict between mother and son began, and now her sobs became audible. Berwick thought he would try one last expedient and if that failed, he almost felt he did not care what became of him. Rising, he went to his sister and encircling her with his arm said, "Lucia, you must aid me in this. I can not bear the disgrace of staying behind."

For one moment the child felt like pleading his cause, but so accustomed was she to depend upon her mother's opinions that she found it impossible to act independently. Anxiety for her brother also helped to banish the momentary yielding, and she replied between her sobs: "No, Berwick, mamma is right and you must not go. I can not, I can not consent to your going to be killed!"

Seeing every avenue of hope closed to him, he hastily left the room and going into the yard back of the house, paced rapidly back and forth. He could have wept bitter tears, but then it was not manly to cry—no, he would leave that to Lucia. So he rapidly

revolved in his mind different plans for action and rejected each as they were presented. Positive disobedience, clandestine escape, and appeal to his captain's authority, were all thought out and dismissed. Finally his habit of obedience and his affection for his mother and Lucia caused his decision to be all that either could have desired. "It will not be so hard after all," he said to himself, "and if any boy twits me for cowardice, I will first knock him down and then I will explain that I am obeying and protecting my mother. And the first thing will be to hunt up Harry Andrews and tell him my trouble."

In the meantime Mrs. Foster had dispatched her man servant to the captain, stating by note her refusal to let Berwick go because he was under age. The self-important captain, "puffed up with a little brief authority," had returned answer that there were others under age going, and if her son did not appear at the proper time he would be court-marshalled and expelled from the company. "Her reply to this bravado was a renewed and positive refusal to let the boy go, which so incensed the petty chief that he ordered some of the men to take their rifles and "bring the young man dead or alive."

When Mrs. Foster saw from her dining-room window her servant running, and followed by a posse of armed men, she became nearly frantic. Running to the back door, she called to Berwick: "Run,

Berwick, run. The men are coming to shoot you. Quickly hide! To the cornfield!"

This bomb-shell came upon the youth just as he begun to feel a little lighter of heart in the resolution to take his special friend into his confidence, and for a moment he was inclined to stay and face this strange turn of affairs, but seeing that his mother became half crazed in her efforts to get him away, and having previously decided on obedience to her, with a bound he cleared a low fence near and was just about to plunge in among the waving corn, when shouts were raised in the street near by and voices reached him yelling: "There he goes!" "Catch him!" "The deserter!" "The coward!"

CHAPTER II.

MISUNDERSTOOD.

THE slight start obtained by Berwick, combined with natural agility, enabled him to outstrip his pursuers. After an hour's search the men returned to report an unavailing pursuit. Later Mrs. Foster had the satisfaction of witnessing the departure of the company without Berwick. They marched out with fife and drum for Lowchester, with flying colors but—low be it spoken—failing hearts. The news brought back by the evening stage was not calculated to quiet anxiety; the driver said there were three hundred strikers at Lowchester waiting for the fifty Madeleinites to "gobble them up."

Harry very soon heard an exaggerated account of Berwick's defection and listened until tired of the tirade against his friend. He silenced his last informant by saying: "I shall not judge until I hear the story from Berwick himself. Strange, indeed, that Berwick Foster should turn sneak!"

As soon as dinner was over he hurried to Mrs. Foster's and there learned that Berwick had not

returned, and his mother added, "I do not expect to see him before night." Harry divined his hiding place at once, and started off for a haunt the two boys had named "Trysting Cave" a retreat known only to themselves.

Taking the same route chosen by his friend that morning Harry passed swiftly on, as if responsive to some hidden influence among the beckoning corn tassels. His rapid pace soon brought him to a babbling brook whose cheery tone spoke encouragingly, as if to assure him of Berwick's rectitude. Why should the brook be so blithe, he thought, if one of its best friends was a coward? Thus nature's forces minister unconsciously to nature's children.

Not stopping to define these influences, Harry hurried along the stream until he came to a grand old elm which nearly obstructed the pathway, and whose time-worn trunk told tales of rising waters and tempest rivings. A passer-by would never have supposed that a secret lay hidden near the old tree, but the initiated Harry clambered over the trunk by a practiced route, and cautiously peered through a mass of green vines depending from the elm's branches and which seemed to have sought a natural resting-place on the hill near by. The truth was that the boys had trained this luxuriant vine to serve their own purposes, and its rich growth concealed a miniature cavern formed by an opening in the hill side. The cavern

was about ten feet long and six wide with a height perhaps of seven feet, and it contained several rocky ledges which served the boys for seats and couches. In their private conferences here, their friendship had been so strongly cemented that they fondly thought it could not be broken.

Harry's intuition guided him aright. As soon as his eyes could penetrate the dimness, he saw Berwick reclining on one of the ledges. But there was something in the boy's attitude unlike the familiar ease of other days; something which sent a chill to Harry's heart and made him hesitate to enter. However, pushing aside the green drapery, with admirable presence of mind he exclaimed, "It is Harry, Berwick—don't get up."

The first ray of light had roused the boy and placed him in a defiant posture, but Harry's tone made him sink again upon the ledge and cover his face with his hands. "Of course I knew where to find you, and of course you expected me to come and hear all about your trouble," said Harry in an apologetic tone.

"Oh! Harry, I thought nobody, not even you, would ever come near me again, and I think if there had been a railroad near I would have run off and hidden my disgrace in some distant place."

"You never act hastily, Berwick, and your better judgment will aid you after awhile. But tell me about it, please, I want to hear the whole story."

"Of course I have been severely criticized, and doubtless you have heard the story told in anything but a complimentary way to me." The tone evinced a new-born bitterness, and Harry did not aggravate it by saying how he had heard the story. He merely said: "I came to you, Berwick, because I wanted to talk it over; and now, please tell me all."

Soothed by his friend's gentleness, Berwick checked his irritation and poured out to Harry the whole story of the events recorded in the last chapter.

"I have never disobeyed mamma, and I could not bring myself to begin now, though I have never before been so unfortunately placed. Do you think I did right?"

Feeling that Berwick had been, in a measure, the victim of circumstances, and yet unable to speak commendingly when he felt there was wrong somewhere, Harry went back to the first cause and speaking frankly, said:

"I think the first wrong was in going into the military company and not being prepared for the 'emergencies' of which papa spoke. I see now what he meant."

"Yes," Berwick answered, in a dispirited way, "your father was right. I believe he always is. I think if papa had lived this disgrace would not have come."

"We must let this teach us a lesson," Harry

moralized, "and make up our minds never to undertake anything which may bring duties we can't perform."

Berwick was sensible and manly enough to acknowledge that his foolish ambition had played him a naughty trick, and he was ready to unite with Harry in any number of good resolutions. After some further talk Harry suggested returning home, as the lengthening shadows betokened evening's approach.

As they neared Mrs. Foster's, Harry encouraged Berwick to meet all taunts by a frank avowal of motives, and to explain the situation to all who inquired. At parting he said: "This will leave you out of the company?"

"Yes, they will expel me."

"Well, never mind, your friends will understand you and take your part, and in time you will be completely vindicated."

Harry took short cuts home that evening, fearing to be plied with questions. That night in thinking the matter over, he was startled by the remembrance of one of Berwick's remarks: "Your father was right, I believe he always is." The unwelcome thought would obtrude itself: His father had been proven far-sighted in one instance might it be that his estimate of Berwick's character would prove correct also? The mere presence of the thought was painful, and finally Harry succeeded in banishing it.

Several days later when the excitement had subsided and Berwick Foster's "escapade" had taken a secondary place in the calendar of town-gossip, Harry was struck by the ridiculous side of the affair and while writing to his uncle brightened the letter by a rather funny account of it. He was reading the letter to his mother before mailing it, when his little sister Ida entered the room. Scarcely waiting for Harry to finish his reading, she ran to Mrs. Andrews and asked permission to visit Lucia Foster; Nannie Burns was waiting for her at the door.

"No, tell Nannie she must go without you this evening, I have something in view for you." Easily appeased, Ida ran to tell Nannie she could not go. Nannie lingered to play awhile and before she left, Ida, in a moment of confidence and with some pride in her big brother's epistolary efforts, said:

"You just ought to've heard what Harry wrote to Uncle Marce about Berwick Foster's running away from the company. It was the funniest thing. We all laughed, Harry made it so funny."

Now little Ida did not mean to tell a falsehood or make mischief, but Nannie carried the account to Lucia and her version made it appear that Harry had written a letter specially to make Berwick an object of derision. Lucia had never liked Harry any too well because he claimed so much of her brother's time, and here was a chance to prove him a traitor and diminish

his influence. As soon, therefore, as she heard Berwick's step in the hall, she called and asked him to take her out in the yard under the trees, for she had something to tell him. Berwick felt she had something important to say and hastened to accede to her request. She began very calmly, feeling that she was to deal with a tender subject.

"Brother, have n't you always thought Harry was your friend?"

"Harry Andrews? Why he is my very best friend, Lucia."

"Well, I have heard something this evening which makes me think him a very strange friend."

"Lucia, you must be careful when you speak of Harry, for I love him dearly and he has been my chief friend and supporter through all my late trouble."

"What would you say to Harry's making game of you?"

"He would never do it," confidently exclaimed Berwick, "no one could make me believe it."

"Nannie Burns says Ida Andrews told her that Harry had written their Uncle Marce a funny letter rediculing you so much that it made you a laughing-stock in the family."

The boy colored violently and struggled to control his emotion. Finally he said, "Nannie is not very truthful, is she?"

"I don't see why you say that, brother, I never heard her accused of story telling."

"Well, she has gotten it wrong this time, certainly; however, I shall speak to Harry and see what foundation the story has." He would have gone to Harry right away, but just then the supper-bell rang and he found he would have to restrain his impatience until the next day. Brooding over the story did not help matters, and anxious as he was to exonerate Harry, yet his warped and naturally suspicious nature asserted itself and made him unhappy. The more he thought over Nannie Burns' story, the more plausible it became, and coming to him at a time when he was still sore from the recent wound and conflict, he was hardly capable of judging even his best friend fairly.

The next morning he rose early and impatiently awaited the stir of rising in the household. He then went down into the front yard and relieved his impatience by pacing back and forth. Presently a voice broke the monotony and sent the blood over Berwick's neck and face.

"Hello! Foster, how goes it, old fellow?"

It was no other than Louis Burns, a cousin of Nannie's and one of the guards, the company having returned in the night. Willingly would Berwick have retreated, but he knew the only thing now to be done was to face and shame out the ignominy. As Louis drew near, he said:

"I believe I owe you a grudge. You are one of the five who would have shot me last Tuesday, if you

had been given half a chance." The tone was half jesting, half earnest, and Louis chose to accept the first interpretation. His reply was in perfect good faith.

"I would give a head of Dutch cabbage to know where you procured your mantle of invisibility, for some uncanny power concealed you. You are not a sufficient mite to hide in a corn husk, the hill is an open pasture and the brook a sworn foe to confiding humanity. Won't you tell me what good fairy aided you and show me her bower?"

"No," replied Berwick, relieved by his companion's pleasantry, "I shall keep my secret for succor in future perils. Only I trust I may never have the rôle of coward to play again."

"Now, Foster, let me tell you that I understand your case and was really on my way this morning to tell you that I sympathize with you, to ask your forgiveness for joining in the chase; also to tell you about the strike if you care to hear."

Berwick was touched by Louis' words, and heartily extending his hand said:

"All is forgotten! Come in, I would really like to hear about your experiences."

"Well said Louis, plunging at once into the safe subject as they seated themselves, we reached Lowchester after a tedious day's march through the exasperating heat, and there found an order to come by first train to Ilketon, where the strikers were assembeld in

force. With quaking hearts we boarded the train, and our courage was not quickened by being landed at Ilketon at 2 a. m., in pitchy darkness and pouring rain. The orders awaiting us were to go into camp near the station until the dawn should bring active service.

"Our camp that night was one heretofore unrecorded in the annals of time. I had some curiosity to see how the fellows were standing it, and being only a raw recruit myself I hoped somebody's courage would inspire my fainting heart. I found Lanty on his knees at prayer, the tears streaming and adding their melancholy part to nature's deluge; Vinky Reed was pale but calm, and his features wore the 'give-me-liberty or-give-me-death' look; Bob Morgan swore more scientifically than ever; Robert cut off a lock of his hair 'while it was yet unsoaked in blood' he said, and wrapping it in a paper containing his name, enclosed the whole in a sealed envelope which found concealment in the bottom of his boot. Our giant, Bergan, was braver than any would have supposed, proving himself better at war than books; while Will Randall showed the white feather. With the first streak of day the most courageous succumbed and our captain had some difficulty to prevent a mutiny. I believe the firing of a gun wonld have scattered us to the four winds.

"After standing in battle array two mortal hours waiting for marching and fighting orders, and having

screwed up our courage to breaking tension, the news came that our services were no longer needed, the 'strike' was about over, the strikers were resuming work and at that particular place there would certainly be no further trouble. You may believe we felt like fighting them. We had been duped, betrayed, and our most sacred feelings were outraged and made game of. A more sheepish-looking set of men it would have been hard to find when we boarded the train a few hours later to return ingloriously to our homes. But we received comfort from the captain. He said we had the satisfaction of having witnessed and subdued a struggle in the ranks, even though we have no wounds or scars to show for it. What became of Robert's love-lock or Charlie Mason's letter to Miss Nellie, we are all anxious to find out. So our experience has made us all, Captain Burry included, very lenient towards you. I happened to hear him say yesterday in reviewing the events: 'Well, boys, I didn't know we had so many cowards in the company. I can tell you one thing, if Berwick Foster had been allowed to come he would have been the bravest here!'"

"Did he say that, Louis?" Well, you are good to come and tell me, and I thank you. But I hear the breakfast bell. Come in."

"No, I must go. But one thing more. Is there any estrangement between you and Harry?" Seeing Berwick's brow darken, Louis hastened to add: "The

reason I ask is because Nannie said something this morning to Aunt Etta about Harry exposing you to ridicule."

"That must be a mistake, Louis, I can't believe it."

"Well, pardon my glibness, I expect Nannie has misunderstood somebody, for she is uncomfortably truthful. Goodbye."

The echoing "goodbye" was sad enough, for Louis' last words had a sting which blotted out the amusing story he had told and destroyed the comfort he had given in delivering the captain's message. Immediately after breakfast Berwick went to Mr. Andrews, and finding Harry, asked him stiffly if he would come for a walk. "Certainly, I am at your service," was the prompt response, though puzzled not a little by Berwick's repelling manner. Little was said by either until beyond the range of curious eyes, when Berwick stopped short and said:

"Harry, I have heard something which I am loth to believe, and I want the truth from you. If you have acted as is reported, our friendship is at an end."

Perfectly astounded, Harry could only look his amazement until he found voice to say, "For mercy's sake, Berwick, explain yourself, I am all in the dark."

"I have heard," and the tone was measured and cool, "from several parties that you made game of me in a letter to your uncle, and made it so funny that I am the laughing stock of the house."

"Strange!" said Harry after a pause, biting his lip and meditating, "I wrote that letter yesterday. Who told you, Berwick?"

"You don't deny it! You wrote such a letter!"

"I did write to Uncle Marce and I told him in a funny way your adventure"—

His companion had been growing more haughty and when Harry mentioned the unfortunate word adventure, he burst into a torrent of angry words which could not be checked.

Finally Harry took advantage of a break to say tremulously: "You did not let me finish. I wrote the letter to make it bright for Uncle Marce who is now an invalid, and so innocent was I of all ridicule of you that if you had come along I would have handed it to you to read."

But the boy's passion was too thoroughly aroused and all Harry's explanations could not patch up a reconciliation. They both felt on separating that the world was darker, they could hardly tell why.

During the succeeding weeks the two saw less of each other than ever before, though Harry strove to atone for his blunder. Singularly enough towards the beginning of autumn, both Mr. Andrews and Mrs. Foster determined to send their sons to boarding-school, and still more singular was it they were both entered at the same school, Edgerton Hall, in the large town of Conington.

Berwick had not yet informed Harry of his mother's intentions, when one morning in early September while Harry was with a crowd playing ball, some one said during a pause in the game: "So Hal, you and Foster are going to be school chums next year. Will you promise to be sweet to each other?"

"I think you are mistaken," Harry quietly replied, "I am not going to school with Berwick."

Louis Burns caught the last clause and treasured it as a fine morsel. He was a smooth-tongued cajoler, and he wanted Berwick's friendship even if Harry had to be sacrificed. The remark was therefore repeated to Berwick, with amplifications.

When Harry heard that Berwick had been entered at Edgerton, he sought him and plead for a renewal of their friendship, now they were going among strangers. Berwick was so touched by Harry's earnestness that his reserve gave way in part, and he almost felt ready to return to the old days.

At last the morning for departure came, and Berwick stood waiting for the coach and Harry, thinking hopefully of brighter days in store. Down the village street dashed the coach and scarcely waiting for it to stop, Berwick leaped hurriedly in. What was his astonishment to find himself the only occupant?

"Why, where is Harry?" he asked the driver.

"Message was, he not goin' this morning?"

The day grew dark for the poor boy, Louis' words

came vividly to memory, and he leaned back in his seat muttering:

"That ends it. Our friendship is transmuted into enmity on one side at least. The hypocrite!"

CHAPTER III.

THE KILLINGBY PRIZE.

THAT day's ride in the stage-coach was the darkest Berwick had ever spent. The scenes through which the road led were picturesque and beautiful, but they lost half their charm for the boy through their very familiarity. Once only did nature rivet his attention—when the mellow autumn sunlight sifting through the forest's leafy sieve, discovered the first autumnal tinting and gave promise of coming October glory.

Berwick would willingly have yielded himself captive to the witching influences that one meets at every turn among September woods, but other thoughts and feelings engrossed him. He was trying to steel his heart forever against Harry, and calling to his aid many petty and malignant things which a month before he would have scorned to make use of, before the solitary day's ride was ended he had succeeded in his object quite well. He started with the basis that Harry was a hypocrite, else why should he have made the remark repeated by Louis, then have come with such fair winning words, and after all have failed to appear at the

proper time? Even if sickness or anything had detained him, could he not have written a note expressive of sorrow at his detention, or at least have sent a message? No, there could be no reason or even plausible excuse for such conduct, so the boy argued, and the more he dwelt upon the subject the angrier he became with his friend and the more strenuously did he resolve that for the future their paths should lie in different and ever-widening directions.

Chemisty tells us that a slight jar will sometimes change the soft yielding amorphite into a hard unimpressionable crystal. Berwick's friendship for Harry was in the amorphite condition when the last jar shocked it into crystallization, and hereafter a new life was to begin for them both—in one sense, a strange and trying life, inasmuch as they would be in daily intercourse and yet so far apart.

At last the weary day was ended, the rumbling coach exchanged for the gliding sleeper, and the unhappy youth lost consciousness for a while in quiet rest.

Morning brought Conington and school, and as Berwick walked the few squares intervening between the depôt and Edgerton Hall he determined to let new friends supply Harry's place, and also to do all in his power to outstrip his late friend even if it brought mortification to his opponent. Error and malice had found the crevice for the entering wedge. Oh! my lad, beware!

The school-house was a large commodious modern building situated on rising ground in the suburbs of the busy manufacturing river town. All around were extensive grounds, extending to within a square of the river Wynne on two sides and on the other two lying side by side with the fairest parts of Conington. From the street in front could be caught glimpses of the skating pond in the rear, while the gymnasium on the right and tennis and base-ball grounds on the left were in full view. Dr. Edgerton, the principal, a genial man devoted to his work and never so happy as when his boys were happy; had lavished his time, taste and fortune to throw around his temporary charge those influences which best foster the natural and healthy growth of a boy's physical and moral nature, and no man deserved success more than he. Responsive to his laudable efforts, came commendations from all parts of the country. Edgerton Hall ranked high among the schools of the land, and many a rising man pointed back to the school as the place where he first started fair and square in life's race.

The house itself consisted of the main building and a wing on either side, all having some pretensions to architectural beauty. The main building contained the family dwelling rooms and some rooms for the boys. Dr. Edgerton did not believe in dormitories; his effort was to make the boys as comfortable as their own homes were, though there was no chance

for luxury or effeminacy among the simple surroundings. The other rooms for the boys were in the left wing, as were also the professors' apartments; while the right wing contained the large exhibition hall, where also the daily devotions were held, the recitation rooms and an in-door play-room.

The influence emanating from the Hall was pleasing even to a casual observer, and as Berwick passed through the wide entrance gates he felt the first lightening of heart since he left home. As the session would open the next day, a great many boys had arrived and were now scattered through the grounds variously engaged. Some were lounging or standing in and around the spacious porch, and as Berwick advanced up the steps rather slowly, one of a group, a dark-eyed, brown-haired, bronzed but pleasant-faced youth of perhaps seventeen years, came forward graciously and extending his hand said:

"I see you are a new boy. I am a pupil of three years standing, and if you like I will take you in to Dr. Edgerton. My name is Phipps."

"You are most kind. I accept your offer willingly. My name is Foster—Berwick Foster."

Through a broad passage and into a room at its lower part his new friend conducted Berwick, and he found himself being warmly welcomed by the master.

Dr. Edgerton might look insignificant to a stranger following him down the street, but get a view of

his fine face and you would want to know him at once. The intellectual breadth of forehead was even less attractive than the keen, lustrous, dark blue eyes whose gentleness and love constituted most of the power dwelling in them. A firm mouth, speaking wise and kind words is surely a valuable and enviable possession, and such the master had, fully revealed by his clean shaven face. The good Doctor might be forty, he might be fifty, but not a failing or a gray hair indicated advancing years; the short wavy brown hair was still thick on brow and crown.

Berwick felt his hand grasped warmly and his heart almost yielded to peaceful influences as the Doctor said: "Welcome among us, my boy. I trust you will find the school truly a home and be benefitted in every way by your experiences here. I will not quiz you to-day, some other time for that. Charlie will now take you and introduce you to your new friends and surroundings. Enjoy yourself to-day, to-morrow we begin work, and then play will be only an incident and a recreation." As the boys were leaving he recalled them a moment: "There is another boy from Madeleine due here to-day—Harry Andrews—I thought perhaps you were coming together."

"I came alone, sir."

The tone betrayed slight embarrassment and it flashed through the Doctor's mind that perhaps there was a family feud or something of the kind; however,

he finally dismissed the boys with a soothing "Very well, that is all."

The next morning a letter came to the principal explaining Harry's delay, but Dr. Edgerton did not again mention the matter to Berwick, fearing he might arouse unpleasant feeling. Several days passed and schoo duties were fairly under way when one morning at recess Lloyd Morris, a rather rough boy who had attached himself to Berwick, ran up to the latter and said:

"One of your Madeleine chaps has just come. I saw him handed in to the Doctor not five minutes ago. Waited to find out his hailing place, heard something about Madeleine, and posted straight to you to know more. Who is it that hails from your 'native'?"

"You will have to interrogate the new-comer himself. I have heard of no arrival."

"You didn't know any other boy was coming from your place?"

"No, I didn't say that. But there might have been a dozen coming and I not have known anything of their plans. I am not on intimate terms with every boy in town."

"Well," replied Lloyd, good-naturedly, "I didn't mean to rile you. Ta, ta." And he left Berwick to his irritability.

The latter carefully avoided Harry all that day and the next, but late in the afternoon of the second day when some sports were in progress, Harry from his

post of observation saw Berwick leave his companions and steal away to a solitary part of the grounds. This was just the opportunity he had been longing for and he at once followed.

Berwick was leaning over the palings absorbed in thought and started when his name was called. Turning he saw Harry and at once sought a quarrel.

"One request I have to make of you Andrews," how grating was the new name, "you observe the boys here only use surnames and you will oblige me by falling into that rule when I am addressed."

"Surely this is but a quibble, you must have some greater cause against me than my style of address. Tell me what it is. Oh, Berwick—I will get used to your new name after awhile—please let us be friends. You have no idea how my heart aches at this coolness. Why do you not believe in my same old friendship?"

There was something very pathetic in the pleading tone, but instead of softening it only seemed to infuriate the other boy, for he answered with suppressed anger:

"Because I believe you to be a hypocrite. I can't dissemble and I despise deceit."

Harry was almost struck dumb by this accusation but he controlled himself by a violent effort and said: "Have a care, Foster, how you make charges you can't sustain. I don't know what has come over you of late. You are so changed I feel it is some other boy I used to love."

"You needn't trouble yourself to hate the present individual, I shall be satisfied with your indifference."

"One thing I would like to explain, and that is the reason I did not come as we arranged."

Berwick really wanted to know the reason, but he felt that to listen longer would be a retreat and an acknowledgement that he was in the wrong; so he said disagreeably:

"It is quite enough for me to know you are here now, and much better that I came alone. You need not trouble yourself to give me additional information."

"Very well," replied Harry turning pale, "I take up your gauntlet, but you must remember you have thrown it without cause. It is a satisfaction to know that some day you will rue it."

"I never expect to deplore truthful discoveries, however unpleasant."

Ignoring the taunt lying in the words, Harry could not trust himself to say more, so he turned and walked rapidly away.

Gaining the privacy of his room, he did what his mother had always taught him to do in trouble, he went on his knees to God. Ah! if Berwick had listened to the reason for Harry's detention, surely their interview had ended differently.

Harry was about ready to start on the morning in question when the whole household was thrown into consternation by one of Mrs. Andrews' alarming

attacks of illness—heart disease, her physician said. It was one of her worst attacks, and just while life seemed almost extinct and all energies were bent upon her relief, the stage coach came for Harry, Mr. Andrews sent a servant to deliver the brief message to the driver, and if Harry thought of Berwick at all, it was with the feeling that of course he would hear all about it. It did not occur to him until their quarrel was at its height that perhaps Berwick had never heard why he was detained.

A terrible sorrow and loneliness gnawed at the poor boy's heart as he rose and threw himself across his bed; all this trouble, combined with homesickness, was almost more than he could bear. He had been misrepresented, misunderstood and accused of hypocrisy by his best friend, and his one fervent boyish affection was crushed ruthlessly under foot by the very object of it. A violent fit of weeping relieved his over-burdened heart, but left a jerking headache. After he grew calmer some comfort came in the thought that his father was right, his confidence had been misplaced, and now having done all he could to exonerate himself and save Berwick, he would have to regard him ever after with indifference.

Would any one consider these boys the victims of circumstances? Nay! the root of the matter extended beyond the boundaries of mere circumstance, far away into the regions of actual sin and among the mountains

of error. The guilt began in listening to an idle tale, and then led on from bad to worse by allowing suspicion and passion to assume the mastery. By such leadings had Berwick Foster become equally his own enemy and Harry's.

Harry was utterly wretched. He was experiencing his first real trouble and it went very hard with him. One of his room-mates coming up before supper he pleaded his headache as an excuse for keeping his room that evening, and the boy kindly carried the message to Dr. Edgerton. After a few days however, Harry seemed to rise superior to the cloud, and news from home of his mother's complete restoration to health cheered him not a little. He soon became a favorite in the school; with the teachers by his diligence in study and deference to constituted authority, and with the boys by his sunny disposition and his abandonment to fun and sport during times of recreation.

The difference between the standing of the two Madeleine boys at Edgerton was that one was admired for his intellectual qualifications and maturity of thought and expression, and to some degree feared because of his reserve and oft-times sternness; the other was loved and trusted for his genial and solid qualities, and his opinion soon gained great weight in matters of doubt on questions of morality.

A day or two after his quarrel with Berwick, Harry and Charlie Phipps were seated together in the lower

part of the school grounds, whittling and talking on various subjects. Presently Harry said: "Who was the queer person who came to my room the other evening and so effectively cured my headache? When I waked she was gone, and desirous as I am to thank her I have only had distant glimpses of her since."

Harry could not have selected a better informant, for Charlie told a story well and was thoroughly competent by reason of three years' residence to explain everything connected with Edgerton.

"I suppose you mean the housekeeper. Why she is the presiding genius of this abode and all sorts of disorders fly at her approach. We boys all love her to death, as you will in time, and she loves us all, whether we are good, bad or indifferent. Some of us have a superstition that she knows everything that goes on, for the exposure of some very secret things have been traced to Seepie."

"What an odd name," interrupted Harry; "do tell me all you know of her, Phipps."

"Well, Catherine Prumms is the real name of this spinster, and she came as housekeeper here when the Doctor first married. I have heard him say often that in a week she became as perfectly identified with the home as part and parcel of the family belongings and nothing would have induced them to give her up. Mrs. Edgerton became an invalid when Lou was about a year old, and now for seventeen years Seepie has had undisputed sway."

"Didn't you say her name was Catherine?"

"Yes. The nickname originated with Miss Mamie when she was a baby. You don't know Miss Mamie; she married Doctor Glancy last session. You may have noticed she has a drowsy look caused by a habit of drooping her eye-lids and scanning the world through half-closed eyes. Baby Mamie mistook this trick for a state of chronic somnia and so called her "Seepie" in her imperfect lingo. The name was caught up by other members of the household and soon passed from a jest to an established fact, so that her real name has been almost obliterated by grim old Time."

"Where did she come from?" "No one knows. She stands on her own merits and so correct is everything connected with her that all are willing to accept her without further testimonials."

"Then she is not as sleepy as she looks?"

"Don't you trust to that, old fellow. She is wide awake, I tell you. One of her characteristics, as I have said, is her all-knowingness in her particular sphere, and you will find her fathom deep in information on household topics, whether the question concerns the whereabouts of a missing lexicon or the peeling of a potato. This knowledge gives her a divine right to command and a human right to be kept posted on all the ins and outs of school and home life; and so rigidly does she maintain these rights that the servants declare

she is supernaturally aided in her researches. Whether or not she has an attendant Ariel, certain it is, very few things transpire unknown to her.

"One peculiarity keeps up the mystery attaching to her from ignorant people. She regards her room as her special sanctum and will not allow any one to enter it, carries the key always with her and neither superiors or subordinates are permitted to profane its sanctity by crossing the threshold. The servants firmly believe it is there she harbors her tale-bearing sprites. In spite of all her oddities we are all devoted to her because she is so good and kind, nurses all our ills away and never lets any boy go hungry if she knows it. It won't be long before you'll vote her a trump."

"I am ready to do so now if she will only cause the supper bell to ring, for I am growing hungry as a bear."

Rising, the boys walked to the house and in a few minutes joined the impatient crowd *en route* for the supper room.

Autumn merged into winter and all was progressing as usual at the school; one day's failures were atoned for by the successes of the next; some boys labored, some plodded and some lagged and halted mentally. The school was like all others that gather together one hundred or more boys.

One morning in early December the Doctor rose

before the assembled school and explained, as had been his wont for two years previous, the "Killingby Prize." The boys called it "Killing-boy" because of the hard work it induced. Every boy, new-comer and all, knew about it of course, but the principal wanted no misunderstanding and he thought best to give lucid explanation himself each year.

"Young gentlemen," he said, there will be this year the usual contest for the 'Killingby Prize,' and it is unnecessary for me to say that I hope the winner will receive his reward through honest merit. The prize is awarded by the interest and generosity of Dr. Killingby, who, as you all know, is professor of mathematics in the State University, and an old friend of mine. The prize consists of a set of books comprehending the whole mathematical course, and is awarded to one of two boys who after three weeks' extra work passes the best examination in mathematics. Dr. Killingby has made it one of the conditions of bestowing the prize that the two contestants be elected by the vote of the entire school from among their own ranks, the two boys receiving the greatest number of votes being declared contestants. The one qualification for the competition is that the boy must have some recognized standing in mathematics. Although not approving this plan, yet I have had no fault to find with the two previous contests. While they excite emulation and fair striving, there has been, to

my knowledge, no wire-pulling, unfair methods or ungenerous feeling. Let me hope that both victor and vanquished in the coming contest will conduct themselves as become gentlemen and Christians. The vote of the school will be taken this afternoon and the result announced to-night at the close of study-hour."

You may be sure every boy was on the qui vive that night as just after the ringing of the nine o'clock bell, Dr. Edgerton entered the school-room and walking to his desk on the platform announced the two names for the coming race. With mingled feelings of surprise, pleasure, disappointment and chagrin, the boys heard the names of Harry Andrews and Berwick Foster!

CHAPTER IV.

AN UNDESIRABLE ACQUAINTANCE.

NONE were more surprised at the result of the voting than the contestants elected, and had it been possible both would have withdrawn from the contest. Berwick was particularly disheartened, and in talking the matter over with the three boys in his room he found cause for anger too.

"It is not fair," he said, "Andrews is ahead of me in geometry and so has the advantage of a better start. No school has a right to throw two boys into a prize contest, it ought to be open to the whole school."

"I agree with you, pard," said Lloyd Morris, "and indeed none of the boys like this style of thing."

"Why then is it permitted" asked Berwick.

"Because," answered an intelligent looking boy named Albert Kenny, "notwithstanding the fact that Doctor Killingby is a musty old professor with cranky notions, yet he is greatly esteemed by Doctor Edgerton who accepted this prize with its conditions rather than offend his old friend."

"Well," answered Berwick as he sprang into bed,

"we must accept our fates gracefully, and if I hope to carry off the 'Killingby' I must first get one good night's rest. But I predict that Doctor Edgerton will one day have cause to deplore the admission of such a false system into his school."

"One thing about it" said Harry May, a tall keen-eyed youth who had not yet spoken, "is that it does not come in with the usual school routine or examinations. Being entirely independent of the school management it is placed early in the session and made an incident instead of a feature."

"An evilly-inclined incident may, however, affect the welfare of the whole," argued Albert.

"I don't deny it" returned Harry May, "and I too, am afraid the Killingby prize will some day bring trouble; but Doctor tolerates it because for two years the winning of this prize has been so fair and satisfactory."

The conversation became rambling and desultory after this and no longer of special interest to us, so we will now turn to Harry Andrews' thoughts and feelings on this special subject. As soon as he found himself thrown into a public contest with Berwick, his first impulse was to decline to enter the lists. He actually went to Doctor Edgerton next morning and stated his unwillingness to run for the prize, but he was informed that he was too late and could not be released. Then his pride gained ground and he determined to

bend all his energies to come out winner in the coming race. He had been made Berwick's antagonist against his volition, and now come of it what would, he was determined to be best man in the contest.

Berwick's indifference towards his former friend had by this time intensified into genuine antipathy, and he felt that he could bear to be beaten by anybody rather than by Harry. "It must not be" he said to himself. "I will strain every energy and make every minute do double work to take from him this prize."

The next three weeks were weeks of intense application for both Berwick and Harry. They were both good mathematicians, but Harry's was undoubtedly the superior mind in this department of learning, so Berwick felt that he had more than ordinary odds to contend against.

The Edgerton boys had long before this perceived the estrangement between the two Madeleine youths, though they knew not the cause. Boys are ever ready for a fight and as soon as the two were arrayed against each other, the special friends of both parties espoused sides and the prize contest soon began to assume a belligerent and partisan character. Betting was introduced, and some boys would bet on both sides with different parties; the hostile feelings abroad provoked several fights; angry disputes were of daily occurrence, and there was anything but a healthy tone among the boys by the time the three weeks of preparation had passed.

The examination was on the last day of school before the Christmas ten days' holiday, and with most of the pupils thoughts of home and even of coming holiday pleasures seemed to have been lost sight of in the excitement attending the "Killingby" prize contest. Berwick and Harry were excused from all other recitations on that day and called early to their special examination. The suspense of the succeeding night was almost too great for youthful endurance, but it was not until the next morning before the departure of any of the boys for their respective homes that before the assembled school Harry Andrews was presented with the Killingby Prize. The good old Doctor thought the cheering feebler than on any of the two other occasions, and his complacency was disturbed by detecting scowls and angry glances from certain boys. What could be the meaning of it? The principal felt that he must sift the matter. The examination had been written, it was held in private by an impartial judge, for the questions were prepared each year by Doctor Killingby himself and given out by one of the older professors. But Doctor Edgerton felt misgivings that the school was aggrieved in some way and he was bound to have a full understanding of the matter.

That evening he sent for Prof. Marsh, a man upon whose judgement he relied and one who had once warned him that the Killingby Prize would some day cause dissension. The Professor heard the Doctor's

question gravely and then replied: "My dear sir, the evil is even more wide spread than you surmise. The mischief engendered by this contest can not now be repaired, I fear; but you have the power, sir, to prevent a recurrence of this evil by making the whole school eligible to the prize."

"Dr. Killingby alone can do that, my dear Professor, but I can refuse to offer the prize in my school unless he withdraws the offensive conditions. And I will do it, now that I find the present plan prejudicial to good at Edgerton Hall."

"I am sincerely glad to hear you say so, Doctor, for if you had not summoned me it was my intention to seek you and tell you of the deleterious effects of this present contest."

"What has been the special trouble this year," asked the Doctor. "Twice before has this prize been given and beyond a passing interest evinced by the school in the triumph of one of its members, after the election of contestants all personal feeling has been merged in the ardor of study and the other boys have been mere friendly spectators."

"Ah! Doctor, personal feeling strikes the key note of the whole matter. This unfortunate prize system has pitted against each other two boys who, for some cause are at enmity, and this enmity is the cause of the present trouble."

"A great pity! A great pity! repeated the Doctor.

After conversing a while longer the Professor left, and Dr. Edgerton, turning to his table, indicted a letter to Dr. Killingby embodying the resolution he had announced to Prof. Marsh. He told his old friend kindly but firmly, that he must refuse his prize hereafter unless he would remove the conditions for competition and throw the contest open to the whole school. As reasons for his action he stated that circumstances attending the winning of the prize this year had shown how unwise the system was. It was not fair for boys to be elected contestants, because their comrades had not sufficient judgment to choose wisely; because a school prize should exclude none from competition for it; because partisanship and all its train of evils were engendered by election, and because boys so arrayed against each other were apt to become unfriendly rivals. All this was couched in the Doctor's choicest language and most graceful rhetoric.

In a few days he received the old Professor's reply, acceding at once to his friend's suggestions. He was sorry indeed, if his short-sightedness had occasioned any trouble at Edgerton Hall whose best interests were dear to his heart. The slightest whisper of experience should always silence the voice of theory, and he was perfectly satisfied to have his prize awarded as his friend thought best. So the "Killingby Prize" having wrought its mischief, took a humble place among other prizes at the close of the session and no longer as a

monopoly endangered the well-being of Edgerton Hall.

The new year brought a resumption of school work and by the second week in January all the boys were pretty well over holiday demoralization and into serious work again. Seepie, who was more of a matron than a house-keeper, considered that she had the moral training of the boys in hand and could often find ways to manage recalcitrant youths when other authorities failed. She had heard of the late struggle and divined its hidden motives, and having had occasion to render valuable service to Berwick several times, she determined to interview him and see if reconciliation could not be effected between him and Harry. An occasion presented ere long when she found Berwick alone in his room, and following her own peculiar tactics she launched straightway into her subject.

"Tell me, Berwick, why you hate Harry Andrews!"

Thus appealed to the boy answered directly but with tremulous voice and paling countenance. "Because he is a fair-spoken hypocrite and such are not congenial to my nature."

"Isn't it just possible you may be self-deceived? The lad does not strike me to be what you represent him and moreover I don't believe he is. You are blinded by passion, and as your good friend I would like to make peace between you."

"If you don't want to make an enemy of me, you will drop Andrews' name out of sight in my presence.

I hate him and would mortifiy him if I could, even as he has recently mortified me."

Seeing that words were wasted when spoken in Harry's favor, she spent her time in trying to show the boy the terrible danger of yielding to such thoughts and feelings as he was indulging. She found a nature that baffled her, but not by any means giving o'er the battle, she retired until she could study him more and find some vulnerable point.

One morning in Febuary Berwick was summoned to Dr. Edgerton's study and informed that a letter had come from his mother requesting permission for him to meet a relative at the wharf and see her safely aboard the train. As the time of the boat's arrival was out of school hours and he need not be absent longer than an hour altogether, the master told Berwick he would accede to his mother's request. The next evening, therefore, Berwick left the school grounds, and not yet having heard the boat whistle he sauntered along in the direction of the wharf. Nearing the place he asked a lounger if the "Garland" would soon be in, and was told that the boat was late by a half hour. Not knowing exactly what to do with himself he turned and retraced his steps for a short distance, then remembering he had seen a hotel near the wharf he thought he would go into the hotel parlor and there await the arrival of the boat.

In crossing an alley which intersected this street,

oaths and angry voices fell upon his ear and naturally he turned to see whence they came. A short way down the alley a fight was in progress, though just then there was an intermission in the fray. With a youth's curiosity to witness a fight and its termination he joined several persons hurrying down to the scene of action, and arrived just as the brawniest fellow levelled a telling blow at his opponent and sent him senseless to the earth. At that moment a policeman's whistle was heard in the distance and the crowd scattered like magic fearing that the officers of the law might find their way to the alley and they be identified with the peace-breakers; so Berwick found himself alone with the unconscious man.

Something in the quiet features before him, blood-stained and but lately distraught by murderous passion as they were, created an intense pity in the boy's heart. Not knowing what to do, he awaited the coming of the police, not thinking that he might be placed in an embarrassing situation were he found there. However, he was spared any suspicion, for no policeman or other human being came to his relief. The poor man still remained unconscious and at his wit's end how to act, Berwick finally remembered that water was the proper restorative in such cases.

Going to a hydrant near by he easily detached the cup and chain and returning with the water, freely bathed and sprinkled the unfortunate man's face. The

blood stains were removed by the boy's charitable actions and their removal discovered a gash in the face near the ear, only surface deep, however, and several already blackening bruises. The man was evidently a rough, but the silken brown hair and certain attempts at respectability evident even in the coarse garments, plainly told that he had fallen from a higher estate.

Gradually the signs of life began to respond to the boy's ministrations and in a few moments the eyes opened and looked bewilderingly around.

"It was a hard blow that nearly finished you," said Berwick. A scowl instantly overspread the countenance as the man muttered: "You have it, youngster, I a' most forgot whir I wus."

"Well, never mind, you are better now. Can I help you to more comfortable quarters?"

The man eyed the boy in honest astonishment and rising feebly, disdaining aid, he leaned against the tottering fence near by. Then still looking at Berwick he said: "I'd like to know the name of the person as ud do Jock Dean a good turn." Happening to see the cup and chain on the ground he continued; "I'm everlastin'ly thankful to ye, young feller, I see now if it hadn't a been fur you I'd 'a' been a laying ther' dead now. The fellers all run and lef' me, did they?"

"They were scared off by a policeman's whistle, and I suppose they thought they could return when the coast was clear."

"An' you stuck by me and got the water," with a significant gesture towards the cup.

"I was glad to be of service. But I must go now, I am expecting a friend on that boat just coming in," and Berwick turned to leave.

"One minute, young feller, I want the name of that person what saved my life to-day, and I want to give ye a lift sometime when ye need me."

"As to that," said Berwick hurriedly, "I need no service, thank you. I am a school-boy, Berwick Foster, at Edgerton Hall." He had added his name because the man had caught his sleeve as if determined to have his one request granted, and now upon being released he hurried to the boat just landing her passengers at the wharf. His cousin was among the passengers and it was not long before she was comfortably aboard her train through Berwick's assistance, and Berwick himself on his homeward route.

He gave some thought to his day's adventure because it had broken in upon the monotony of school life, but on nearing the Hall, Jock Dean and his probable vicissitudes were dismissed from his mind.

Not so with the object of his compassion, Jock Dean. The poor unfortunate had known better days, but it was in long past years when the name had been spelt with a final e, which vowel had been dropped somewhere among his changing fortunes. It had been so long since Jock had been the recipient of a kind

action that he exalted Berwick into an object of almost adoring worship. To think that anybody would bring water to restore him, wicked, unlucky Jock Dean, to save his worthless life, why he had thought only that morning that every man's hand was against him. He was just in that frame of mind where a good influence might be his salvation.

The meeting with Jock Dean was on Wednesday. Saturday afternoon Charlie Phipps called Berwick to go walking with him. Charlie had been thinking matters over as well as Seepie, and relying on his influence with Berwick as an older boy and a friend, he undertook to restore good feeling between Berwick and Harry.

He broached the subject, however, more guardedly and with greater tact than Seepie had done, and he talked long and earnestly. He found his companion more obstinate than he had supposed possible, and at last he felt that he had exhausted all his arguments and there was no more to be said. After a period of silence Berwick said:

"Phipps, I don't want to lose your friendship, but I must say that you have a surface acquaintance with Andrews, as I had for several years. Since I have known him as he really is, I have had cause enough to hate him, and now I feel mean enough to wish to mortify or disgrace him in some way."

"It is to be hoped no opportunity will present itself

while you bear this malice, and in the meantime I shall keep a friendly watch over both you and Harry. I am sure there is some terrible misunderstanding which time alone can set right."

So absorbed were the boys that they had not noticed the advance of a third party. Their earnest converse had led them to the extreme end of the playgrounds near the river, and now just outside the palings stood a man whom Berwick recognized at once as his alley acquaintance. Thinking of course the man sought him for money's sake, he left Phipps and leaning over the fence held out his hand with a dollar in it.

"Can I do anything for you to-day?" Berwick asked this because he was at a loss for something to say.

Jock at first looked insulted at the supposition that he had come begging and hanging his head doggedly, replied:

"I didn't come after ye fur money; I come to see if ye needed a sarvice o' any kind."

"No," answered Berwick without withdrawing his hand, "I am much obliged to you. But you might need this change."

Sheepishly Jock took it and hastily put it out of sight, and then doffing his well-worn cap said: "Good-day to ye, gentlemen," and in a lower tone to Berwick, "call on me when ye need me."

Berwick explained to Phipps as they retraced their steps to the Hall: "A vagrant I met the other day at the wharf. I hope he won't be dogging my footsteps continually, its a nuisance!"

Berwick would not have spoken with such calm dismissal of the whole matter, could he have heard the muttered malediction pronounced upon the head of some one as Jock hurried along by the water side until he gained a rude shanty, whose shabbiness was in keeping with its out-door surroundings and in-door connections.

Rushing in through the half-barred door, he exclaimed:

"Hurrah, mates! a drink all round, and somethin' left to stake on the next deal. What wouldn't a body do for the giver o' this?"

CHAPTER V.

THE EXCURSION.

JOCK DEAN sat on a low porch which formed the front of a miserable dwelling overlooking the river. It was a lovely day, such days as late winter can bring to cheat us into believing that spring is among us.

The early morning sun lit up the waters with shimmering glory and mantled the hills beyond with ever-changing hues of light and shade. But Jock thought not of the glittering flash following in the wake of the passing oars-man, or even the dignified glide of the laden steamer far out on the river; if his thoughts dwelt at all upon the scene before him, they consisted merely of fleeting remembrances of sundry duckings, divings, or fishings, or perhaps they reverted to the pirate's craft among other and less public waters. For poor Jock had trodden well-nigh all the dark ways of sin, and had gone from one to another trying to silence the remnants of a conscience yet in his possession.

His early life was passed on an English farm. He came of good parentage; his father and mother both belonged to England's yeomanry. But a life of

adventure so glowingly and attractively pictured by pernicious literature had tempted him from his home, and the first wrong step led to others until he found himself fast bound in chains of sin and crime.

Many lands and climes had witnessed his wanderings, but he had of late come to consider America his adopted home. The craziest crafts stay nearest the shore, and the poor wrecked man felt it necessary to have a place of anchorage now that the premature decay of manhood's powers rendered the "old boat no longer sea-worthy."

Foremost among Jock's reflections that morning were suggestions of various ways and means by which he could assist his one friend, as he fondly termed Berwick. Gratitude still dwelt in the outcast's breast and would have been one of the surest means of winning him to better things had any one cared to try. Poor Jock! his "one friend" would have repudiated the title, and there was no other human help at hand. At last he seemed satisfied with the result of his meditations and rising shook himself like a great dog. Grinning broadly he said to himself as he entered the hovel, "Now, I'll be a gentleman for awhile, I guess."

Emerging in the course of an hour, he was as nearly transformed as it was possible for a man of his stamp to become. The loose blouse and baggy ragged breeches had given place to a plain suit of clothes, somewhat the worse for wear, but still neat and

arranged with some deference to the becoming. The fraying cap was replaced by a slouch hat whose brim on one side was rolling and on the other side flaring. But the most remarkable thing about the new man was a shirt front not exactly clean, but set off to great advantage in the wearer's eyes by a fresh paper collar and a black cravat. A casual observer would have supposed him an ordinary plodding man with a well-earned title to respectability, and only one well versed in human physiognomy would have read a secret lying under the imperturbable exterior. Jock evidently had an errand of his own upon whose execution he was bent.

At Edgerton Hall the intermediate examinations were over, and the school had resumed its usual duties and daily round. Harry Andrews came out well from his examinations and for a new boy his success was almost without precedent. All seemed to be smooth and fair under his feet, and no day however brief seemed to depart without some specially studious "deed to crown it."

In one department alone did Berwick transcend Harry, and that was in the debating society. It seemed that Harry was not to follow his father's profession unless perseverance should bring self-confidence, for he seemed to lose all self-control when upon the floor alone facing the smallest audience. Berwick, on the contrary, was complete master of himself in debate and his

calmness inspired listeners with confidence in his abilities. By his success in the society debates and his power in declamation on all occasions, impromptu or studied, he won the title of the orator of the school. Harry felt secretly glad that Berwick carried off enviable laurels in some of the school's departments, for he knew that his one-time friend was fast becoming more and more embittered, and consequently self-centered.

One morning early in March, Dr. Edgerton made the welcome announcement that he was going to give the school a holiday, that he had chartered a boat to carry them all to Tazewell's Museum and he wanted them to spend a happy and profitable day. Youthful enthusiasm would not be suppressed but found vent in three cheers for Dr. Edgerton and three more for the holiday. The boys then dispersed to make their simple preparations for the short trip.

Tazewell's Museum was on an island three miles below Conington and it was a favorite resort in that region. The Museum contained some specimens of value, and the good Doctor always felt that the school year would be incomplete without a trip to the Museum and a view of its collections for the benefit of the boys.

He invariably chose a beautiful day in the early spring because, he said in his simple-mindedness, it gave the boys a holiday when they least expected it.

Coming, however, about the same time every year, it had ceased to be a surprise to the boys, though a knowledge of the good in store for them never detracted from their enjoyment when it came. Then they could go to Tazewell's Museum when they could go nowhere else, for the building was open summer and winter and made perfectly comfortable for visitors. There were three hotels on the island and while two were only summer hotels, the other was ready every day in the year to furnish accommodations and meals.

In less than an hour after the announcement of a holiday, "The Clipper" was proving true to her name by carrying the school rapidly down to Mary's Island. Arrived there Dr. Edgerton told the boys they had permission to scatter and enjoy themselves, the sole embargo he laid upon their liberty was that they must not go beyond hailing distance of the Museum, and they must not stay out on the ground too long at a time as it was early spring and the ground was apt to be damp.

The day was a charming one with sun and air so wooing that very few boys sought the Museum shades just then; most of them sauntered or hurried to well-know resorts through the grounds, while many dispersed along the river banks on the look-out for more than ordinary amusements.

Charles Phipps and Berwick were together as usual and the former had undertaken to show his new friend

all the attractions of the place. Turning an angle near the river bank, they saw a short distance ahead three men fastening to the bank a row boat in which they had evidently just arrived. Berwick was intensely annoyed to recognize Jock Dean as one of the men, but perceiving that he and his companion were not yet seen, he made a significant gesture to Charlie and they quickly walked away in the other direction.

"I don't see why I am constantly meeting that man," said Berwick in an agitated tone, "I am sure I don't seek him. Wonder how much he would require never to cross my path again."

"Perhaps money is the spell that binds him to you. Suppose you don't give him any more."

"I'll take your suggestion. It has a good ring and perhaps may be effectual in shaking him off."

About a half hour later Jock was seated on the edge of a pier which extended out into the river perhaps a hundred yards. Five or six boys, among them Harry Andrews, were bound for that pier, because they had heard it condemned and they wanted to indulge that boyish sentiment that rather likes the element of risk and danger.

At first they all regarded Jock with some curiosity and shyness, but that soon wore off and they talked to him as freely as they talked among themselves.

"Andrews," said a boy named Stockard, "wouldn't it be a lark for any boy who has pluck enough to walk out to the edge of that pier?"

"I don't suppose any body would be so fool-hardy as to attempt such a thing after the pier has been pronounced dangerous," answered Harry.

Jock, who had started when Andrews' name was spoken, here turned quickly to the boy and said: "Who calls that pier dangerous? On'y some people what's afeard o' ther own shadders. I've got a chum who walked out ther no longer than yisterday, and I dar you to do it. They call ye a brave boy, do they? Well now, prove it by showin' 'em ye're not afeard."

Harry did not like to have his actions sustain the accusition of cowardice, but he first looked around among his companions for some encouragement before accepting the man's strange challenge.

"Don't do it, Andrews." "I wouldn't," several said, but Stockard urged: "Why not? The man ought to know better than we do about it."

"Know? O' course I know. I'd do it myself but that wouldn't show how brave this here young chap is," with a sneering emphasis on the word brave, and Jock looked at Harry disdainfully.

Goaded on by these taunts Harry jumped on the pier and was about to trust himself to its rottenness when a voice called loudly:

"Andrews, what in the world are you going to do?" It was Phipps who spoke as he ran swiftly to join the group, looking in an alarmed way at Harry on the pier.

"This man assures me the pier is perfectly safe and has dared me to make trial of it. As my head don't swim, I have undertaken to prove my bravery."

"You can just prove your moral courage by stepping off again. My word is of as much value as this man's and I assure you that no one has ventured on that pier for years. Who removed the danger signal?" Phipps looked suspiciously at Jock and yet he felt at a loss to know why the man should desire to endanger one of the Edgerton boys. "It was here when I passed an hour ago."

"As I never was here afore, I can't tell ye nothin' about it," and his words conveyed more truth than he intended.

"Why is not the pier destroyed? Might it not be a snare to some other thoughtless people?" questioned Harry.

"I think there is some absurd story about a person of rank, the Grand Duke Alexis perhaps, having walked to the edge with the support of his valet's arm, and this pier must remain a monument to titled bravery. For my own part, I think there are a thousand braver things that we may find to do every day, with all due deference to you, Andrews."

"I trust I shall profit by your rebuke, Phipps; and now let's seek other playing quarters, this vicinity has become too suggestive for my comfort."

"Agreed," responded the boys, and they moved off leaving Jock to his solitary reflections.

It was late in the afternoon when in an unguarded moment Berwick found himself a prey to Jock. Curbing his irritation he felt for a coin, when remembering his vow to Phipps he withdrew his hand empty. Jock was keen enough to see the movement and its result, but far from construing it rightly he thought the boy had found himself without money. Berwick's words confirmed this impression.

"I can't help you in any way to-day," and he was moving off when Jock detained him as he had done once before by catching his arm and bending forward said: "I jist been a wantin ye to know that any time ye may have need o' me ye can find me at a house on the river, third house from the hotel."

"You are one of the most grateful persons I ever saw, but I don't think I shall need your services at all, my man: if I do, I shall certainly call on you. Good-bye."

Thus summarily dismissed Jock had to subside, but he looked after the retreating figure and soliloquized: "But I'll please ye yet and show ye that I mean my thanks."

The boys returned to Edgerton Hall in time for supper and all declared the day had been a glorious one, full of frolic and fun, not unmixed with some slight profit from the Museum exhibit.

Among his mail next day Harry found a letter from his mother in which she told him that the 16th was

Ida's birth-day and she suggested that he send her a simple brooch or some other small piece of jewelry. Of course the money accompanied the suggestion, for school-boys are never supposed to be "flush."

After school Harry carried his letter to Dr. Edgerton and asked his permission to go into town and make the desired purchase. Consent was readily given and Harry had quite an air of importance as he yelled good-bye to the different groups in passing down to and out of the front gates. Many ran after him eager to know his destination, but he playfully refused to give a satisfactory answer, choosing rather to excite their curiosity and gratify it on his return. "I wish I had asked the Doctor to let one of the boys go with me," he soliloquized after he was fairly beyond the school grounds and had begun to realize that he had a long walk before him. But it was too late now, he would lose too much time in returning to seek company, so he consoled himself by thinking it was the first time he had been out alone since he left home.

The suggestion of home recalled Berwick and he found himself wondering if good feeling would ever be restored between them. The lapse of months had softened him wonderfully toward Berwick and he longed to break down the wall of separation which seemed to be strengthening instead of weakening as the days came and went. Knowing, however, that no effort of his could accomplish the desired end, he felt that he

could do no more than hope and pray and wait for a more favorable turn in the tide.

So absorbed was he in his reflections that he did not notice a man advance from an open door-way just after he had passed, look at him fixedly a few minutes and then follow him, keeping about a square's distance in the rear.

Harry walked on unconscious of the man following, and turned finally into the street where the shop he sought was to be found. Entering it, he made known his wants to a clerk and was shown some very handsome jewels. Harry bent over them admiringly, for even a boy is caught by the lustre of beautiful and costly gems, but he told the clerk of the modest sum he wished to pay for a brooch and the clerk leaving the gems still before him went to another case to procure what he desired.

Left alone, Harry found himself nudged familiarly on the shoulder by somebody's elbow. Raising his eyes he saw at his side Jock Dean all in his best array. Involuntarily the boy shrank back; for some reason he felt that this man with whom he had had one singular experience and of whose very name he was ignorant, meant him no good.

"Buyin' your sweetheart some trinkets, eh?" queried Jock.

Harry felt like disdaining all reply, but swallowing his chagrin he answered civilly, "No, I am not yet blessed with such good fortune as a sweetheart."

The return of the clerk and Harry's attention to business shut off conversation for the time, but Jock still lingered near and annoyed the boy very much by making several remarks indicating intimate acquaintanceship. As soon as the clerk saw Harry's companion he had quickly pushed the box of jewels into the case and closed it, an action which Harry could not but feel to be a stranger's protest against such a companion for a youth of respectable appearance.

The purchase was at last made, though Harry occupied a very much longer time in closing the bargain than he would naturally have taken, hoping the officious vagrant would go his way.

Jock was evidently waiting for him for he left the store with Harry and walked several squares with him, talking most of the time of the foolish ideas current regarding that pier. The whole conversation was uncomfortable for Harry and he made a resolution never to come into town again unaccompanied as long as he remained at Edgerton Hall. Great was his relief when Jock turned into a side street and said, "Well I guess our roads part here. Good-day and good luck to ye," even though Harry fancied there was a covert sneer in the man's very style of leave-taking. He did not feel safe until the big gates of Edgerton Hall closed behind him, and then he gave utterance to a hope that he might never again meet his man of the pier.

The next morning the principal was waited upon by

an elderly man carefully-dressed, whom the pupils surmised to be either a present or future patron of the school. In reality he proved to be a detective who informed the astonished Doctor that suspicion pointed strongly to one of his boys as the possessor of a valuable turquoise, stolen the evening previous from McLumley's jewelry establishment. It was useless for the good Doctor to storm or to plead the honor and innocence of one and all of his pupils; the stern accuser was inflexible and Harry Andrews, the suspected boy, had to be called.

It was some time before Harry could realize the situation and then he of course indignantly and with all the force of a virtuous soul refuted the charge. However, he had to submit to an ignominious searching of his pockets.

When the detective found not the lost gem on Harry's person, Dr. Edgerton began most graciously to dismiss his guest.

"Not so fast, my dear sir, all this young man's belongings must be searched. Are these the clothes, young gentleman, that you wore into town yesterday?"

"I wore my other coat." "You will please take me to that coat," said the detective pompously.

The three went together to Harry's room and the latter pointed to his coat hanging on its peg and felt himself growing angry as the intruder rumaged mercilessly through all the pockets. From the outside left-hand pocket was produced the missing jewel!

CHAPTER VI.

REPARATION.

HARRY was struck dumb by the sight of the jewel; he felt there must be sleight-of-hand about it or he was the victim of a practical joke. View the matter as he would, the fact remained that he was being accused by an officer of the law of a horrible sin. He, an innocent one, was held fast in the toils of some malicious power and the reiterated assertions of his innocence were but proofs of guilt in the eyes of the detective. Overwhelmed by his misfortune he could only say "I never took it, sir, and I don't know how it came into my pocket. I am sure there will be some explanation."

The whole school rose indignant at this charge against their beloved play-mate, though some were staggered by the finding of the turquoise.

Berwick was shocked beyond measure. Whatever else he might believe about Harry he knew the sin of thieving did not lie at his door, and he almost felt himself called upon to rise and vindicate his former

friend. In the midst of all Seepie found Berwick alone and as was her custom she "pitched into him."

"Somehow," she said, "I feel like your enmity has been the cause of this trouble."

"That is very unreasonable, Seepie, for while I can't understand Harry's implication in this affair, I am sure I've had nothing to do with it."

"Well, one thing is certain," concluded Seepie, "you are going to find your judgment against the poor boy as false as these present charges. Mark my words!"

As Seepie left him his mail was handed in, two letters, one from Lucia and the other addressed in a strange hand. Curiosity prompted the opening of the latter first and what was his amazement and consternation to read the following, written in a stiff scrawling hand.

"I hope it ill give ye plesshur to no I hav bin the feller to do yer enemy the bad turn hes met with. I herd ye say ye hated him and I had to do sumthin fur ye to show my thanx. I hav lef america agin an ye wont see me enny more but I ill remember to my di in da the feller as saved my life—yers sur rispecfly Jock Dean.

If Berwick had been a condemned criminal his face could not have been more despairing in its expression. Forgetting Lucia's letter he paced up and down the room recalling all the recent events. He remembered

the apparition of Jock the day he and Charlie had the now memorable conversation. Of course then was the time Jock heard his expression of hatred towards Harry. He knew now why the fellow had dogged his footsteps with constant proffers of service. After all, Seepie was right; he had been the cause of all this trouble.

A torrent of different emotions almost overcame him. Harry in trouble, and such dire trouble, was to him the Harry of other days; in lifting from him this public accusation he felt he must also bury all private animosity; in his deep humiliation he was willing to acknowledge himself all wrong and make full restitution toward his friend.

Then came the question, what could be done for Harry? The note unsupported by other testimony was of no value, the one witness who could establish the poor boy's innocence had fled no one knew whither, and would probably never be heard from again. Berwick began to feel that his story might look like a very sensational and improbable one. None of his evidence, correct as it was, would have one feather's weight with judge or jury, and all things considered, it looked dark for Harry.

He must unburden his mind to some one so he sought Seepie, thinking it was but fair that she should know. He had great faith in her clear-headedness, and a vague hope came that she might discover a path

out of the darkness. Having found her he asked if she couldn't take him to some place where they would be secure from eavesdroppers and interruptions as he had matters of moment to communicate. Seeing the intense earnestness of the youth and the grief expressed in his countenance, Seepie made one heroic effort and rising equal to the occasion, she handed him a key saying, "Go to my room and wait for me, I will join you presently."

In an odd angle of the spacious middle mansion Berwick came to Seepie's room, the mysterious chamber of the house, and letting himself in removed the key to the inside. He fully appreciated the exceptional honor conferred upon him, and at any other time would have taken a keen interest in the room and its belongings. While the apartment had its peculiar individuality, it was simplicity itself in its appointments.

Opposite the door nodded a trunk of uncertain age, like its possessor; above it on a wide shelf stood one bereaved-looking book which might have been mistaken for one of the sleeping fathers, for to all appearances its majestic repose was never molested. This book Seepie was wont to refer to below stairs as her library. Closer scrutiny proved the volume to be Webster's Unabridged and I have always thought it a great pity its author could never know of this one instance of its elevation to the exclusion of all other

literature. The curtains of the couch, for Seepie was too old-fashioned to sleep unshielded by curtains, were so heavy that the great marvel was she ever breathed through them. Such draperies contained in themselves ideas of everlasting repose, and small wonder the occupant of the bed carried about with her suggestions of slumbers indulged in so freely there.

To the right of the door was displayed a huge chest of drawers whose antique carvings would have caused the heart of an antiquary to swell with envy; such an one would then and there have told her to name her own price and close the bargain. I can well imagine her under such circumstances flashing indignant fire from animated eyes; for Seepie's belongings were just as essential parts of her existence as was the oxygen she breathed, and no money could have bought even a faded picture from the walls. The things mentioned were the oddities of the room, the other furniture was ordinary and commonplace.

Berwick had not long to wait, and as soon as Seepie came he showed her the letter and told her all. While the kind-hearted woman sympathized with the boy's grief she was rather severe with him, for she wanted him to realize the danger of yielding to evil influences. She talked very plainly and showed him how he had allowed Harry to fall from his esteem only because of gossiping tales and hasty judgements; that his obstinacy and ignoble pride had widened the

breach and made a broad entrance-way, not only for his own sin of false accusation of and hatred towards his friend, but also for the sin of an abandoned soul whose repentance and conversion could not be compassed as easily as his own. Berwick recognized in anguish of soul all the terrible consequences of his departure from right, and he evinced a genuine desire to make all the reparation in his power. "What can I do?" was his cry. "How can I save Harry?"

Seepie was just the adviser the boy needed. "First" she said softly, "you must ask God to forgive you and help you in your efforts to do right; with His aid you will be ready for action. Then go and secure a lawyer and the detective who came after Harry, and find the guilty man and make him write out the affidavit of his guilt in the presence of you three."

"More easily said than done," answered the boy, "don't you see the man has left the country?" extending the note.

"Pooh!" exclaimed Seepie disdainfully, "that's a hoax. He thought you were as depraved as himself or he wouldn't have sent that note right away; take my word for it, he is in hiding somewhere in this very town and means to let you know it when it suits his convenience."

"You really believe this?" asked Berwick excitedly.

"I do, indeed," was the assuring reply.

"Then I'll go at once."

"Remember the first thing to be done," cautioned his good friend as he was leaving the room, "and afterwards I may trust you to reconcile yourself to Harry."

"You may," said Berwick earnestly, "and I shall always feel very grateful to you, Seepie."

Bail had been given for Harry and he stayed in his room the greater part of his time. He had forborne to write home hoping for some brightening of the dark mysterious clouds around him.

Dr. Edgerton's permission was easily obtained for a leave of absence for Berwick and although not put in possession of all the facts, enough was told to make him understand that it was a measure looking towards Harry's vindication. Before leaving, Berwick requested him to inform Harry that a clue had been obtained to the perpetrator of this calumny, but he added, "Will you please withhold my name for the present?"

"Certainly, my boy, if you desire it. Do I rightly surmise that you would yourself like to be the bearer of good news to your companion?"

"Yes, sir."

"God bless you, Berwick," fervently responded the Doctor, and with a gladdened heart the boy sped upon his errand. As he was leaving the grounds Charlie Phipps called to him to wait just a moment.

"Foster," he said, "I don't know where you are going nor do I want to quiz you, only I feel intutitively

that you are working for Harry. There is one thing I want you to know, it may be important. I had a talk with Harry this morning and he recalls for the first time since this stunning blow fell that your pensioner, Jock Dean, came into the jewelry store and stayed until he left and afterwards walked several squares with him. He seems to attribute this calamity to that man's agency and now that I remember his strange conduct towards Harry down at St. Mary's the other day, I am inclined to accept the same view of the case.,

"What did the villain do at St. Mary's?" questioned Berwick. "I did not hear of it."

Charlie related Jock's challenge and his own intervention on Harry's behalf. When he finished Berwick said, "Yes, Phipps, that man has been the cause of all this and I am going now to see if he can be apprehended. But don't tell Andrews 'till I come back."

"I understand," cheerily responded Phipps. "Goodbye and success to your mission."

Berwick first found the detective and stated the case fully. Reluctant as the man was to have his customary shrewdness put to the blush, yet he was impressed by the straightforwardness of Berwick's story and after the first hesitation, entered with interest into plans for Jock's capture.

Disguising himself as a vagabond he followed

Berwick's lead to the "house by the river, third from the hotel," specified by Jock as his rendezvous. Alas! Seepie was wrong for once; the woman in charge of the domicile declared most solemnly that the man sought had gone by the river, she did not mention direction, the day before. A search, thorough and prolonged, revealed nothing, and they were obliged to accept the fact that Jock was a fugitive. Berwick almost gave way under the force of this revelation, but the detective reassured him.

"You will have to wait a day or two, young man. Leave the matter to me. He has but a start of twenty-four hours and that is a small difficulty for our profession to surmount. Go home and be ready to come at any minute I send for you. I must go to work, the minutes are precious. Good-bye."

Berwick's dejected air revealed his failure to those awaiting his coming before his lips had spoken and it took all of Charlie's hopeful words and Seepie's encouraging views to brace him up. He kept aloof from Harry, for he felt that only the success of this plan for Harry's exoneration could pave the way for their meeting.

Harry, in the meantime, was obliged to apprise his father of the distressing affair, and he was greatly comforted by letters containing repeated assurances of his father's confidence and faith in his integrity. Mr. Andrews also said that his mother and sisters should know nothing of the affair for a while.

After two days of agonizing suspense, Berwick received a welcome message from the detective. It contained instructions to repair to the wharf hotel and await orders. Very quickly the boy went and he had only a few impatient minutes to himself when a stranger came forward and said, "If your name is Berwick Foster, you may follow me."

Reposing perfect confidence in his guide, Berwick followed him to the water's edge and entered with him a small row boat, obeying at once a signal to use one of the oars. Evening had come to throw its shadow over fair day, but ere night drew surrounding objects to its oblivion, Berwick found himself landing on the shore of St. Mary's Island. His look of surprise was lost in the gathering darkness but it must have been devined by his companion, who after securing the boat said, "Be prepared for surprises, but don't betray yourself. Only obey orders."

From a clump of trees near a man advanced whom Berwick recognized at once as his friend, the detective.

"Don't lose the sound of my steps," he said, "but follow at a distance."

Soon they came in sight of a light and Berwick and his companion halted because the leading footsteps ceased. The first detective, for the two men were of the same profession, now returned and bade Berwick go forward alone, take a survey of the house just

ahead and of its inmates through the lighted window, and then come back and report.

Berwick advanced as guardedly as if that brief experience with detectives had endowed him with all their caution, and looking through the partially obstructed window he saw within four men around the table playing cards. A second glance discovered Jock to be one of the party and the thought came that Seepie was not so far wrong after all.

The house was a mere hovel, with one room and an attic, situated in a most isolated and unfrequented part of the island. Here Jock had hidden himself for the time, meaning to return to Conington if no suspicion was cast upon him, or if he found himself sought he could easily go further.

Berwick returned and related what he had seen. Wood, the managing detective, said, "We will have to retire into this grove until the three men leave, for Jock is lodging here temporarily alone. The hut belongs to one of the men yonder, but he is always off and away by midnight—absent half the night at some ugly work."

Having selected their post of waiting and observation, Wood said to Berwick, "Perhaps you would like to know how I traced him."

"I would, indeed."

"I thought," continued the informant, "that the woman we interviewed could put us on his track if

she would, and after offering her a sufficiently large bribe she told me he had gone down the river. Not another scrap would she tell and it may have been she knew no more. Knowing St. Mary's to be a favorite hiding place, I spent all my time here. This morning I saw a man answering the description you gave me coming in very early with a boat load of fish, and I watched him as he carried his haul to this hut. Of course he didn't see me. I at once despatched for my reserve force, four of whom are now within calling distance and the fifth is with us. If trouble with all the men arises, we will not be overpowered. Our men sent the message to you, one of them met you at the wharf, and you know the rest."

"How did you find out who Jock was lodging with"?

"All the information I wanted I got from an island fisherman who is in our pay."

Silence was now enjoined and Berwick found the time of waiting very long. At last the signal to move was given and the three proceeded to the cabin. Though Berwick's untrained ears had not heard the departure of the men, yet Jock was seated at the table alone, dejectedly fingering some small coins.

As had been prearranged, Berwick pushed open the poorly-fastened door with a slight effort and entered alone. The sudden appearance of a ghost would have caused poor Jock less of a shock than the very human figure of Berwick Foster at that time and place. He

was immediately convinced, though he could not have expressed it, that he had misinterpreted his "one friend," and would now feel the displeasure of him from whom he least expected censure. Hanging his head under Berwick's cool survey he said in a low tone, "I done it fur you, an' talkin' 'bout thanks, ye aint got none."

"I am not here to argue. If you meant to do me a service you have utterly failed, and now I have come for you to go back to Conington and prove Harry Andrew's innocence." Then softening as he saw the utter dejection of the man, and remembering his own share in the guilt, Berwick continued, "Nothing will be done to you. I will get you off from punishment, because you didn't really steal the turquoise, you know. You meant all the time it should be found. Come Jock."

"I'm not goin with ye."

"Oh! yes, you are my man," chimed in Wood, "we have been interested listeners and now you must come with us."

Jock saw there was no alternative, so he doggedly consented to go. As his testimony was important and they feared he might attempt to escape, the detectives manacled him and led him away between them. The boat was unfastened and he ordered in, when being one moment free, he cleared bank and boat with a bound and fell with a splash into the dark river.

"Oh! he has escaped," exclaimed Berwick.

"Escape is impossible, manacled as he is," replied Wood. "The wretch has commited suicide. You will now have to rely upon our testimony, young man, which will be all that is necessary to clear your friend."

"But can nothing be done to save poor Jock?"

"No, the night is too black. We may as well return to Conington."

Berwick was now the one to be pitied. He felt that this final tragedy, the loss of a human life, and such a life, was but one of the faults of his sin. While he was guiltless of any immediate participation in Jock's evil plans, he could not shake off a certain measure of responsibility for those dreadful events. A thoroughly repentant boy was he, ready to devote his life's remainder to atonement for his one grievious mistake.

He was the first to carry the good news of acquittal to Harry, and a speedy reconciliation followed.

The detectives were generously recompensed by Mr. Andrews and by Berwick, who insisted upon bearing part of the expense. Jock's body was washed ashore below St. Mary's and Berwick saw him decently buried.

It has been said that friendship is like china; when once broken, however carefully mended afterwards, it will always bear the mark of the cement. If this be true, then the friendship existing between Berwick and Harry was a grand exception. Ever afterwards they

were more devoted, more lenient towards each other's faults, more considerate of each other's feelings, and as a result they were more valuable as members of the youthful society at Edgerton Hall.

AGNES.

AGNES.

THE select Female Seminary of Reifton had just suspended work for the day, and was courteously dismissing the day pupils, sending them home by lane and highway. Each seemed to have her own particular reason for being in a hurry; even the drones of the day appeared transformed by a breath of outer air into active-going and business-loving scholars. As a singular contrast to the homeward bound were four girls who sauntered slowly down the broad walk, and having reached the entrance gate, lingered there while the others passed out. The mystery was explained later when almost all the scholars were out of sight.

The conversation before had been languishing and desultory, but now it assumed a most vivacious and interesting tone; it was plain that some pet plan was under discussion and maturing. For fully a half hour the four talked volubly on, though the winter afternoon was bleak and stray flakes of snow gave warning of more to follow. The falling crystals, however, only added intensity to their satisfaction and in high glee they separated to seek their several homes. If we follow Agnes Laramie, one of the quartette, to her home, we will learn the all-important secret.

Rushing into her mother's room with true schoolgirl impetuosity, she exclaimed breathlessly, "Oh! mother, we are going evergreening Friday; that is, if you will let me." She seemed to take it for granted that her mother's permission was all that was necessary. Mrs. Laramie was a bright, clever little woman whom her two big boys were wont to call "great mamma," as a teasing contrast to her slight, girlish figure, and a compliment to her superior mental, social and domestic qualities. She had wisely won and discreetly maintained control over her children, and while entering into every innocent pleasure and enhancing it tenfold, she was slow to express either commendation or disapproval until she had reviewed the situation thoroughly. It was well she was such a capable woman for the whole family management of late years had devolved of necessity upon her. Mr. Laramie was a civil engineer and absent the greater part of the time. When our story begins he had been in a distant state six months and the time of his return was indefinite.

Mrs. Laramie replied brightly and laughingly to Agnes' implied request.

"Of course, my love, I can't say yea or nay until I know more of your plan. Who are the indefinite 'we'? To what class of human endeavor does 'evergreening' belong? Is it a word of Reifton Seminary coinage"?

"Now mother, you are laughing at me" said Agnes deprecatingly, though amused in spite of her

earnestness. "Let me tell you about it. You know Mary Fitch, Ethel Mason, Anna Cunningham and I want to get up a Christmas celebration for our mission sewing-school, and you have promised us the use of our parlors. The particulars of the celebration itself we are going to keep a secret and surprise you all as well as the children. Only we four girls with Herbert's help are going to carry out the programme. Perhaps we may get Allie Fitch and Burt and Con Mason to help us too, but we haven't fully decided. To-day Mr. Ruling said our holiday would begin Friday instead of Saturday, because Miss Bertha has to leave Friday morning and Miss Annie is sick.

"Mr. Ruling says it would be a lame day without either of them, so we had better add it to our holidays than maintain the farce of a school-day which belies its name." Here Agnes stopped to remember at what point she had digressed and Mrs. Laramie said, "Well, I now understand who are going 'evergreening' but you have yet to explain the precise meaning of the term."

"I am just coming to that, mother; we girls want to get laurel and cedar to decorate the walls and stage."

"Do I hear aright? A stage? Shall we entertain the little waifs with charades or private theatricals?"

"Neither, Mamma," and Agnes laughed responsive to the merriment in her mother's eyes, "but we mean to have some pretty effects. The boys will take us

Friday to Glenn's Gap where we can get a cart-load of evergreens and a pretty tree."

"Glenn's Gap is at least fifteen miles away and these are short winter days, my dear."

"I know, mother, but Mary's aunt Mary wants us all to spend the night with her near the Gap and come home next day."

"Why not let the boys get evergreens nearer home?"

"Because we wanted the fun of the trip. Oh! mother, don't say I can't go."

"You know, my daughter, that I never deny you any reasonable request without a weighty cause. There is a reason which compels me to deny you this present pleasure, and I am sorry my child has set her heart on the trip. Don't ask me why, dear, but try to bear the disappointment bravely."

Agnes felt that a girl of sixteen must not cry over a disappointment, so she choked back the fullness in her throat and walked to the window. For awhile the swiftly descending flakes seemed to mock her and invite to impossible joys, but in a short while the buoyancy of youth, combined with perfect confidence in her mother's judgement, triumphed over the dispairing out-look, and by the time night came the tea-bell interrupted a merry romp with her eighteen year old brother, Herbert. When Agnes carried her disappointment to school the next day, her three friends

decided unanimously to share her exile from paradise, and leave the evergreen gathering, as Mrs. Laramie had suggested, to the accommodating boys.

Friday afternoon Mrs. Paulding, the Laramie's next door neighbor, came over to ask Agnes to spend the night with her. Her husband had been called away suddenly and having no one else in the house, she felt nervous and lonely. Agnes readily consented as Mrs. Paulding was one of her special favorites and she considered herself fortunate in being selected as companion. She went over soon after tea and spent a very pleasant evening. She and Mrs. Paulding occupied the same room and Agnes' bed was near a window which overlooked not only the neighbor's back premises, but her father's also.

Sometime during the night Agnes found herself sitting up in bed and leaning forward, her gaze riveted on a blaze not far distant. Regaining consciousness she realized that some explanation must attach to that fire. Unable alone to locate the flame, she roused Mrs. Paulding and asked what she thought it meant. They both decided that it was on an island just across a small stream which skirted the rear property on that side of the street. They argued that as there were no houses on that part of the island, the fire was built by butchers, who were perhaps killing hogs. But this theory was shaken by the fact that the fire seemed in undisputed possession of the ground, no figures could

be seen moving around, and even while they talked the flames seemed to have increased in volume. Consulting the watch they found it was but two o'clock, too early for a butcher's fire.

They finally decided to hurry to Mrs. Laramie's and rouse the household, as there might be mischief brewing. Dressing quickly, they sallied bravely into the deserted street, and soon had the family awakened. Herbert found on investigation, that a board fence enclosing his father's rear premises had burnt, and he arrived in time to extinguish the flame, just as it was in the act of leaping on a shed, which covered a mass of hay and other combustibles. By so doing he was enabled to prevent great damage to the Laramies and perhaps to others.

Every effort to discover the origin of the fire proved unavailing; no one could ever tell whether it was the work of an accidental spark or of an incendiary.

The next morning Agnes was the heroine of the hour. The topic was fully discussed at the breakfast table, and Agnes was quizzed as to the mode of discovery. She could say nothing except that she awoke and found herself peering through the window at the flame, and wondering for a minute where she was and what it all meant. After breakfast Mrs. Laramie said to her, "I think you may be glad now that I said 'No' to your pleasure excursion. Suppose you and Herbert had both been absent last night. Even had the

fire been discovered by some one else, you would not now have the satisfaction of knowing that you saved our property, and perhaps our lives."

"Oh! mother you were right; you always are and I shall never again murmur at any decree you may make. But, mother, what caused me to see the fire?"

"Certainly 'twas the guiding of the Father's hand, and I trust you will fully realize that truth, my daughter," seriously responded her mother. Then changing her tone, she said, with gleaming eyes, "but come, let us see who the 'bus is bringing us from the train, and you will understand why I didn't want you to be absent from home this morning."

"Surely not Papa!" exclaimed the excited girl. "Oh! mother, how good you are," and Mrs. Laramie felt repaid for the trouble it had given to thwart Agnes without an apparent reason.

Mr. Laramie it really was, and Agnes said she wouldn't have given the first kiss for a dozen "evergreenings."

The father's return sent a thrill of joy through the household, and when Charlie, the oldest son, returned from college by the evening train to spend his holidays, the family circle felt that its happiness was complete. Agnes' little sister, Mamie, five years old, and the two other juveniles of the family, Maury and Fred, testified their joy by all sorts of mischievious pranks, until everybody declared such holidays had never been known before.

Previous to all this influx of pleasure, Agnes thought she had worked with a will, but now new zest was added to work, ideas came like inspiration and the coming Christmas celebration received such brilliant touches here and there that it bid fair to excel anything of the kind ever conceived of.

At last the all-eventful Christmas Eve arrived. Three o'clock was the hour appointed, so the children would have ample time after the celebration to get to their homes before dark, and also in order to give the household time to put the parlors in order before night. The children, many of whom came early and all of whom were there by half-past two, were taken into the back parlor where they were to wait until three. The school numbered thirty, but there were no less than fifty children present. Presisely at the hour appointed the folding doors opened and the expectant little ones were marched to seats arranged for them, whence they could feast their eyes on a sight they had never before seen, and which their most beautiful dreams had never realized.

The gas was burning brightly in the day-darkened room and revealed plainly every adornment. The pictures and walls where wreathed with evergreens and embelished with illuminated texts. Above the curtains, which concealed the stage, was a motto of welcome in laurel and holly and the curtain itself was ornamented. An organ led the childrens' carols, after which there was a prayer, and then for a few

minutes the clergyman tried to make the children understand the one great meaning of the gathering. The story of Christmastide was simply and briefly told and relieved by questions to which shyness only prevented better answers. He tried to impress upon those little neglected and in some cases unlovely little ones, that it was human love and kindness born of the Divine, which would make them so happy that afternoon, and he urged them not only to imitate the good example of their teachers, who were doing so much for them, but to try to learn more of Him and be more like Him who had done for them more than the whole world could do, even if it tried. He then handed them over to the young ladies, who would not tire them, he said.

The curtain was now drawn aside by Herbert for about two-thirds of the way, revealing a prettily decorated stage. The curtain and a screen concealed one end of the stage, and the children found themselves wondering whether there could be anything priettier behind there. Charlie Laramie appeared dressed as a herald and made the following speach:

"Children, I have come to tell you that the four seasons, Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter, have come here this evening to give you presents and to make you happy. I hope you will be grateful for their kindness and enjoy the gifts they bring." He then blew a horn and announced "Spring."

Anna Cunningham, appropriately dressed, now came upon the stage bearing a large wire frame in which were thirty small bouquets. She held them in front of her and recited the following:

I come, the Genius of the Spring,
On tired foot and weary wing;
In sunny climes I left my crest
To bring to you my season's best;
Intruding thus on Winter's sway,
To meet you, children, here to-day.
I've brought with me the prettiest flowers,
I've found among my vernal bowers,
I give them with this Christmas cheer
And say good-bye until next year.

Spring then took her stand at the end of the stage farthest from the curtain, resting her flowery frame on the floor at her side. The herald then called "Summer," and blew a blast on his horn which made the audience laugh. Mary Fitch, as Summer, advanced empty handed, but she was followed by Maury and Fred Laramie, fancifully dressed, who bore between them a hamper filled with tin cans. This odd spectacle certainly needed explanation and Summer quickly gratified the evident curiosity of all assembled. Stepping to the front she said:

My sister, Spring, has been here I see.
Sweet flowers she brought, but as for me,
I've come a long distance to give you a treat,
This bleak Winter-time will find hard to beat.

I give you a can, which when opened you'll find,
Contains something nice, which will just suit your mind;
As you mingle it now with your Christmas cheer,
Perhaps you will wish that the Summer was here.

Mary retired towards the back of the stage, near where Anna stood, and mounted guard over her hamper of cans.

"Autumn" was next summoned by the herald. Ethel Mason, in sober gray, beautifully adorned with leaves of nature's own brilliant coloring, came in response to the call. The small boys were again in requisition and this time they bore a basket of rosy apples, mingled with odd-looking little fat bags. Her recitation was brief and to the point, like the proceeding.

You know me, children, know me well;
I'm Autumn. In the lonely dell
Rare nuts you've found, and apples too,
While following me the pastures through.
'Tis only one short month agone,
I gave my place to Winter's throne,
But now from out my treasured store,
I've brought you nuts and apples more;
I trust they'll help make Christmas bright,
For I must bid you now good-night.

Autumn then stationed herself by her basket while "Winter" was loudly summoned. When Agnes appeared, clad in a semblance of snow and icicles, a

round of applause greeted her. With burning cheeks and air demure she gave her recitation as follows:

> The seasons three have spent their art,
> And given you of their wealth a part,
> But on my bleak and barren hills,
> Where lies the snow by ice-bound rills,
> The death of flower and fruit is tragic,
> I therefore have recourse to magic.
> And while I jingle merry bells,
> And holy Christmas music swells,
> I've built for you a fairy tree,
> Which you will now accept from me;
> And as the gifts make young hearts glad
> You'll think Old Winter's not so bad.

As Agnes finished the curtains were drawn aside and the screen removed, displaying the tree in all its beauty. A lovely sight it was too, as the few tapers were lighted and the boys from the hall adjoining threw calcium lights on the stage. The branches of the tree had been dipped in a solution of alumn and the effect was like frost-work. Then gold and silver moss depended from the branches, while ornaments and pretty cornicopias added to the loveliness. The mission children must have felt that they were in enchanted land; it was really a sight in itself to see the awed admiration and intense wonder expressed in their faces. While the tapers burnt, each child was called by name and received from Spring, a small bouquet; from Summer, a can of

fruit or vegetables; from Autumn, a bag of nuts and an apple; and from Winter, a cornicopia filled with candy. After the list of thirty names was exhausted, Autumn stepped forward and said she had more nuts and apples which she would be glad to distribute to children present who were not members of the school. Of course she added "you could not expect to be remembered like the children who are regular attendants of the school."

About twenty children were the recipients of her bounty. A carol and the benediction closed the evening and the children were dismissed. One of the larger scholars lingered to speak to Agnes, who was very much gratified to hear her say "Miss Agnes, the girls have asked me to say we all thank you and the other young ladies so much for being so kind to us."

At the tea-table everyone was jubilant over the success of the afternoon. Mrs. Laramie asked who originated the four-act drama and who composed the orations. Agnes' conscious blushes betrayed the authorship before Herbert had time to say, "The honor belongs to my gifted sister."

"It was truly my daughter," said Mr. Laramie, "an admirably conceived and well executed thing of its kind, and I think you deserve to be congratulated on your success."

"Thank you, papa, but I think your home-coming and mother's occasional suggestions and encouragement had much to do with the successful issue."

"What I do not understand about it," said Mrs. Laramie, "is where all the money came from, for this evening's entertainment had its corresponding money value."

"Mr. Clayburn," explained Agnes, "gave us the money in the treasury appropriated to the school and there were some private contributions. We had enough money to buy ornaments for the tree, calcium lights and part of our presents. The deficiency we four girls made up out of our own pockets and those of our friends," with a significant glance at Herbert and Charlie."

"Where did the flowers come from?" asked Maury. "They were hardest to get," answered Agnes, "but we sent to Philadelphia, and got our small bouquets for less than five cents apiece."

"Well, my children," said Mr. Laramie, "it is a great pleasure to come home and find you all so actively engaged in works of love for others. It is the only true road to peace now and hereafter."

It is needless to add that the Laramies spent an ideal Christmas, happy in their family relations and in dispensing cheerfulness abroad.

A BONA FIDE GHOST.

A BONA FIDE GHOST.

THERE was a real ghost in the Loring family. It was not one of those traditional spectres of the dim receding past which descend by inheritance from a long line of ancestors, and whose shadowy outline no human eye has ever seen. This ghost was a very modern affair destined perhaps to become a future inheritance but at present a real and almost tangible fact. The manner and time of its discovery corresponded precisely with all theories pertaining to ghostly visitations.

The Loring family consisted of mother, father and four children. Gus and Dave Loring were twins and inseparable companions. Ella was twenty and unusually well-developed in mind and body, while Madge was a precocious child of twelve. A new member had been added to the family two years previous in the person of a young lady cousin left an orphan by the death of her father, and to whom Mr. Loring had extended the shelter of his home. On the particular evening in question Mr. and Mrs. Loring with the cousin, Mary Lieberfelt, had gone to a concert, leaving the young people alone. The evening was a delightful

one in early October, and the bright moon-light flooding the hall had such a charming influence that Ella had begged to leave the gas unlighted there.

The four were seated in the cozy sitting-room with the doors open, feeling gratified to have a comfortable fire on one hand and moonlight effects on the other. School-books were in front of each, but attention was drawn from studious thoughts by the topic of conversation. Gus had introduced nutting expeditions as the topic.

"I tell you how we'll manage it, girls," suggested Dave, as some difficulties presented themselves concerning the sisters' participation in the sport, "we'll get father to hire a cart and old Ben will carry us four to Simmons' grove where we can get all the nuts we want." "Wouldn't a small spring-wagon be better," amended Gus. "You girls take up more room than boys, and you could not ride home on the walnuts without staining your skirts."

"I shall recommend you as thoughtful solver of dilemmas to some Eastern monarch, Gus," said Ella with mimic applause.

"My powers are limited. The talisman which guides me becomes dumb beyond the threshold of my father's house" replied Gus, falling into Ella's romantic vein.

"Well," said the more practical Dave, "I think we are taking time most severely 'by the fore-lock.' We

may form a dozen plans yet before we really go nutting."

"We alone suffer in so doing. It doesn't hurt Old Time, but our impatient fingers will doubtless grow tired of holding on," and Gus turned again to the book before him. "While we are talking of nuts, I have a message from Miss Lynn Chisholm for you all," said Madge.

A laugh followed the mention of the name. Miss Lynn was a mine of misapplied words, and she rarely gave utterance to a sentence which did not contain some great blunder. Her conversation was ludicrous to these well informed and clever young people, but they never betrayed in her presence the amusement they felt. She was a neighbor and a sensitive but well-meaning old maid, and the Lorings would not have wounded her feelings for any self-gratification. Among themselves, however, they enjoyed her quaint sayings and laughed over her distortion of words.

"Well, bring out the negative-positive, absurdo-serio message, for such I dare say it is," said Gus.

"No, the message is intelligible this time," said Madge, but the smile did not subside as she continued, "she told me that we were all 'indited to come into her grove and recept as many chestnuts as we could purvey home.'"

"What do you think she told me the other day?" asked Ella. "That her brother had been selected to

the Probationer's Congress, but she hoped he wouldn't recept. He was down on whiskey, though, sometimes she thought he was too strenious on it."

"Did she mean," questioned Dave that he had been nominated a Prohibition candidate?"

"Yes," answered Gus, "I knew that."

"She said a very funny thing at Mrs. Blair's funeral last week. Some man was very officious in Miss Lynn's special department of service, and she said to a friend, 'if that man didn't stop bein' so beneficious she would make her exile.'"

"But it is kind of Miss Lynn to share her nuts with us and pleasant to know we will not really be indicted for gathering them. We must thank her appropriately."

"Miss Lynn is really one of the best hearted people I know, in spite of her eccentricities," said Ella. "I have been making a pair of mittens and a comforter for her to let her know that we appreciate her many kind acts. Did you see how much I crocheted to-day, Madge?"

"No, I was out with Minnie Lisle all the afternoon."

"I must show you," said Ella, "I have introduced my new stitch." She hurried to a work-basket standing near the hall door and was about to take up her work and return to the circle around the fire when a moving object in the hall attracted her attention. Raising her eyes she saw a tall figure apparently in

woman's dress glide through the moonlight in the hall and out through the rear door.

Ella was a brave girl and silly superstition had no hold upon her. Christian faith had driven afar from her soul unreasonable fear. Therefore though she thought the figure looked odd, yet she reflected it must be the housekeeper or some of that dignitary's friends. Dismissing the figure from her mind she showed her work to Madge and after a critical examination of the crocheting, and expression of much admiration by both girls, Ella arose to replace her work.

As she faced the door, there in the moonlight stood the same figure looking at her with burning eyes, and even as she looked it moved away with gliding motion and no sound of footsteps was heard.

As the apparition disappeared Ella glanced quickly at her brothers and sister to see if they had noticed anything amiss. They were deeply engrossed in their books and had seen nothing. Still thinking the figure must be some one wanting the housekeeper, she left the sitting-room, passed through the dining-room beyond and went out on a porch upon which the hall door opened, fully expecting to find the visitor there. Disappointed, she went straight into the hall and there came upon a scene of excitement. Madge rushed wildly against her, and into the sitting-room, exclaiming "Oh! Ella, did you see that woman?"

"What woman?" asked Ella innocently.

"Why there was a woman in the hall standing by the door looking at me. She had bright, fiery eyes like uncle Tom's, and I thought he had a joke of some kind on hand and I would be the first to find it out. So I ran out into the hall and after the figure to the front door, and when I could have put my hand on it, it vanished." Madge had told all this very rapidly and her excitement increased so visibly that Ella forebore to make known her experience.

"Oh! Madge, you are excited and the woman was farther away than you thought."

"No," persisted the child, shivering with nervous dread, "I know it was a spirit. Why didn't I hear footsteps? The only sound was a scraping sound like that made among dead leaves."

"Well, you see the crushing of leaves deadened the sound of her steps," said Ella reassuringly, though she began to feel a nervousness herself when she remembered the absence of sound in her own experience with the figure, but she bravely braced herself against fear and strove to quiet her sister, who cried until her parents and Mary came home. After Mrs. Loring had taken Madge up stairs Ella related her part of the story. The family felt somewhat alarmed because they feared burglary more than a whole army of spectres. The boys had already taken a superficial hunt, but now a thorough search was instituted through the house and premises. No lurking thief was dis-

covered, nothing unusual appeared and no clue to the mystery was forthcoming. For several days every member of the household was on the alert to discover the disturber of the family peace, but nothing satisfactory developed.

The elders of the family have always believed some one wanted to frighten the young people and afterward felt ashamed of the cowardly attempt and were afraid to confess, but Madge remains unshaken in the belief in her one real ghost. Ella tells the experience sometimes, with an intense longing to be able to give a sequel. But the mystery for the Lorings remains, and will remain, unless the following letter should one day fall into their hands.

DEAR ASHETON:

I am minded to make of you a confidant to-night, for I must unburden my full soul to some sympathetic friend. You know of my passion for beautiful Mary Lieberfelt, but you have yet to learn that in consequence of my vile attachment to the dregs of wine, old Loring has politely asked me to discontinue my visits to the house. Feeling it best to respect such authority I have been reduced to the extremity of viewing my queen through the open window. To night I ventured too far, I had become almost wild for a sight of her. (My last weeks' spree shut out all vision for the time being.) Finding the blinds closed and no light in the hall I ventured in, with my long cape dangling about my heels as a disguise. You will perceive I was

just tight enough to be reckless. As bad luck would have it, the eagle-eyed Ella spied me and I was fain to move out the nearest way. That nearest way proved the wrong way for me and I watched my opportunity to slip out on the street. Opposite the door who should confront me again but the Ella maiden and again I was obliged to retreat. Instead of following me, she executed a flank movement with intention to attack the enemy's rear. Divining her plan I made another effort to escape, but lingered just a moment to scan the room for a glimpse of Mary. "To deliberate is to be lost." This time Madge, the youngest of the Lorings, detected my guilty self, and less strategic than her sister she plunged boldly into the fray. I had just time enough to escape her clutches by sliding off the side of the front porch. Perhaps they are now terrified by thoughts of ghosts or burglar. I expect they'll christen me ghost, because I had on my noiseless slippers and the only sound I made was when my cape swept the fallen leaves on the porch. The autumn has reached the stage where the leaves have lost their silken rustle and their harsh accent tells of whisperings from the winds of adversity. The evening's experience has completely sobered me and I tell you what, I mean to mend my ways and swear off from drink for the sake of my mother and sweet Mary Lieberfelt. Just see if I don't.

Yours in confidence,

H. H.

And he kept his pledge.

THE PARADISE OF PINS.

THE PARADISE OF PINS.

AN HALLOW-E'EN PHANTASY.

"WHERE do all the lost pins go?" The question had dropped idly from my lips and intended more to break in upon the motony of a reverie into which I had drifted than for the purpose of obtaing information, yet found utterance because of the fact that a pin which held my collar had treacherously deserted its post and eluded all my efforts to find it.

Knowing that I was alone in the room, my surprise can easily be imagined when I heard a tiny, screeching voice ask, "Would you really like to know?"

While fumbling for my spectacles, two theories concerning the voice flashed through my mind. I thought either the children had a new toy and were trying to play a trick on their near-sighted auntie, or a phonograph had been turned on in my vicinity. No sooner, however, were my patient eyes brought to bear upon the scene than I perceived an object stranger than the voice had been. Lying on the arm of a chair near my elbow was the tiniest mite of a living thing. So curious was it that my description will scarcely be believed.

The object was an ordinary toilet pin, which had become exaggerated into a human resemblance. The metallic head was the most exact copy of a human head, arms grew from the pin's side and terminated in miniature hands, whose fingers were so small as to be scarcely visible; wings originated where the shoulders were supposed to be. An airy little garment draped the slender figure, but made no attempt to conceal the lower part, which was merely the point of a pin. I had heard of mermaids, half woman, half fish; I had heard of centaurs, half man, half horse; but I realized that mankind had yet to learn of the existence of a creature part man and part pin. The queer little thing evidently enjoyed my profound amazement, for the silence was broken by a bell-like tinkling, which I interpreted to mean a laugh at my expense. The sound loosed my tongue.

"In the name of all that is curious, tell me who and what you are!"

"If you mortals had sense enough to believe in fairy tales, and would remember when Hallow E'en comes round," replied the object, evasively, "you would not be so surprised at the sight of me."

I then remembered that this was the last day of October, and I had promised the young people to assist in some fortune-hunting game in the evening.

"The sight of you is enough to make me believe anything," I agreed. "I am a convert from this

moment. Now, will you please introduce yourself?"

"I am one of the lost pins, and have been translated from earth to the paradise of pins."

"Well," said I, "you have changed wonderfully since you went there. How came you to return?"

"Twice a year, on the first of May and on Holy Eve, the gates of our paradise are thrown open to all pins who care to revisit the earth. I always avail myself of this privilege."

"Where is your paradise?" queried I, my curiosity now fully aroused.

"That is our secret," answered my cautious pin; "but if you will consent to let my wings blindfold you and carry you there and back, I will gratify your curiosity, showing you our paradise."

I laughed long and heartily at the idea of my one-hundred-and-forty pounds being overshadowed and borne away by this diminutive creature, but when I gave verbal expression to my doubts, my odd little friend seemed all the more ambitious to display its boasted powers. Willing to test its incredible ability, I finally consented to make the journey. "Before we leave," I questioned, "tell me why you have remained on your back all this time."

"Because it is the only position in which I am visible to you. On the wing I fade from your sight, my stiffness prevents my sitting down, and I am too pointed to stand with any comfort. We have a hundred ways of resting in paradise, on earth only one."

"Very well," said I, anxious to see for myself this new elysium, "I am impatient to be off."

The words had barely escaped from my mouth when a mist closed round me, and I felt myself being carried forward. Those sensations were followed in a few moments by the realization of once more feeling firm ground under my feet. I was standing in a clear light, looking out upon a scene of beauty. A landscape in miniature was spread before me, consisting of soft swelling downs, with here and there a rise, approaching in height an ordinary hill. The absence of water was a striking feature. Broad-leaved palms and many varieties of catcus made the only shadows to be seen anywhere. The whole plain was covered with beautiful moss of every variety and all the colors and shades of colors imaginable. The whole looked like one great garden of low-clipped foliage plants. Metallic forms like my companion gleamed here and there and everywhere. There were also other and odder shapes.

"I will explain what may puzzle you," said my informant. "When we pins are lost we have to stay awhile where we fall, and then if no one picks us up we come here. We naturally feel provoked with people who pick us up to add to their own good luck. But what do you think of our paradise?"

"I am not surprised that you would wish to come to this beautiful place as soon as possible."

"Why are those pins so dingy-looking?" I asked, pointing to some lustreless ones in the distance.

"Those pins stayed out of paradise too long. They are caught by a monster we very much dread, whose name is Old Rusty, and who disgraces pins and spoils their brightness by covering them with an ugly coat, which it takes ages, even in paradise, to wear off."

A question I was about to ask was anticipated by my informant.

"Do you see that immense pin over by the palm grove?" he asked.

"Yes," I assented, "I see the pin you mean, though my conception of size would never have pronounced that pin immense."

"We call her Old Mother Bender," continued the pin, ignoring my effort at fault-finding, "because of her superior size and her peculiar occupation. Her business is to straighten crooked pins and give them their proper shape. Her establishment used to be just outside of paradise, but Old Rusty got hold of so many of her subjects that she had to move inside."

"How do you keep him out of paradise?" I asked.

"By having no water. He can't live without moisture."

"Why," I asked again, "are some pins unchanged in form? I see several exactly like those in my cushion at home."

I knew I must seem like a bundle of interrogation points, but then I had come to a strange country and I must find out all about it before my return home.

"Those pins," untiringly responded my companion, "did not do their duty faithfully while in the world. Your Collar pin belongs to this class." I was glad to hear the traitor would be punished, for my freed collar had been creeping up toward my ears ever since my journey to pin paradise began. "They have to sincerely repent of their evil ways before they can enjoy the delights all around them. They are sometimes sent to earth to warn mortals to be good. Whenever you feel the prick of a pin you may know it is one of these penitent ones urging you to forsake some false way."

I determined that as soon as I reached home I would hunt and find that pin and keep it on earth as long as possible. "Why is it that pins stick babies, who are so guiltless?" asked I, thinking to corner my narrator.

"Oh!" he answered, ringing out a laugh, "the infants are then suffering because their nurses sin. It is a case of the innocent suffering for the guilty."

"I see some pins have on golden crowns or wreaths," I remarked.

"Yes; they are the pins which brides throw away when disrobing. They come straight to paradise, and are the only honored ones among us."

"Then these are all the lost pins which disappear so mysteriously."

"You do not see all here," corrected the pin.

"These pins belong to this century. A hedge yonder divides us from last century pins, and the pins of each century have a realm to themselves."

"Oh! do show me some antique pins," I exclaimed.

My guide gratified my curiosity, and showed me pins of all ages, from those used in the Temple hangings to those cast away as a good omen by the bride of yesterday. He bade me remember, however, that some valuable pins were so guarded by man that they were obliged to remain on earth. As instances, he cited the bronze pins from Thebes, in the Louvre, and also in the Abbott collection. I enjoyed the quaint, odd sights greatly, and was sorry when the pin said he must take me home, as he would barely have time to return to paradise before the gates closed. I thanked him as best I could, and won a promise to visit me again. He told me, however, at parting, that he could never conduct me to pin paradise again. A second trip would be fraught with severe penalties for both of us. The penalties would be, I should never be free all my life long from the pricking of pins, and he would be deprived of his present glorious form and reduced to an ignominious existence as a comman earthly pin.

MY FIRST INVESTMENT.

MY FIRST INVESTMENT.

FOUNDED ON FACT.

I REMEMBER having, as a boy, a wholesome fear of my grandfather. His unswerving rectitude, his attentions to children never separable from a moral to be taught, his unimpeachable justice combined with his stern punishment of the guilty, were all calculated to inspire respect largely sprinkled with dread. He tested me every Christmas by forcing a choice between a pile of one-hundred bright new coppers and a modest ten-dollar gold piece placed alongside. When I became old enough to choose wisely and to want an explanation of his conduct, he said: "The gilded wings of a butterfly would not be worth anything at the mint, and I want to teach you always to choose solid worth rather than be misled by showy appearance." So the lesson was impressed.

One of my boyhood faults was a tendency to careless speaking, to the use of big figures when discussing money matters, and to exaggeration. My grandfather noted this trait and prepared the remedy, as the sequel will reveal.

At the age of thirteen I was gifted with "mother

wit" my teachers said, but I had no corresponding zeal for application. Urged by my repeated solicitations, and also by the prospect of my becoming a good-for-naught if I remained longer tied to the school desk, my father consented to give me a salary of two-hundred a year in his lumber yard, that business having been the family rage for several generations. The sense of importance engendered by paying my board and carrying a night key quite inflated me with pride, and made me feel quite competent to conduct to a successful issue the most intricate business transaction. There was smooth sailing in my little pond, and I was daily growing more infatuated with my own piloting, when one day an ill wind sprang up submerging me under billows of trouble.

I was driving with my grandfather on the wharf that morning. He plied me with questions concerning prices, quality, grain and so on, of the lumber awaiting transportation, while I brought ready replies from my recently garnered store of knowledge. Presently we came upon a great heap of refuse oars, the cast-away of our company's shipment a few days previous.

"What are those worth, my son?" asked my grandfather, pointing to the pile.

"I don't suppose they are worth very much," I answered, for the first time rather at a loss.

"Not very much, eh? Well, now, what would you give for them?"

"I wouldn't give more than twenty dollars," I answered, with the airs of a millionaire, not stopping to weigh my words.

"Twenty dollars! That's a good sale for the company. You shall have them, Charles, and pay for them at once."

"But I don't *want* to buy those old things, grandpa," I pleaded, alarmed by his serious tone.

His reply was very imperative. "You have valued them at twenty dollars, my boy. I shall sell them to you because we will never have a similar offer."

"But they are not worth that," I still urged, half frantic at the idea of burying a tithe of my salary under such rubbish.

"You have made your own valuation, my son. Had you said they were worthless, I would not have made you our purchaser. We will now drive to the office and formulate the sale."

I knew my grandfather was inexorable, so I could only anathematize myself during the remainder of the drive. I overdrew my salary twenty dollars, bore the mortification of a homily from my father, called down upon my head some disparaging epithets from my less devout uncle, and went home that evening with a night-mare in my pocket in the shape of a receipted bill for twenty dollars paid for refuse oars not worth a farthing.

But for my mother, I believe I could not have

borne the load of humiliation. The magic of her comfort smoothed my pillow that night, and her assurance that my merchandise must be of some value and would be useful to somebody, inspired me to feel that a purchaser was waiting for me to finish my night's rest to conclude a bargain advantageous to me.

During the three following weeks I felt that my hair would turn gray in my efforts to sell those oars. I was the laughing-stock of the family; my brothers were constantly asking me to take them rowing; every time I went into the office my uncle admonished me not to be "o'er careful;" my chums would often ask if I had learned to "paddle my own canoe;" and one day even my father waived his usual gravity to advise me to make friends with the skiff-builders. Life was all disheartening. My grandfather having called my attention to the fact that the wharfage was encroaching upon my property, I adopted his suggestion and had our teams move those luckless oars to our lumber-yard.

Another plan having presented itself to my agitated brain, I took advantage of a half-holiday to go down among the block and pump makers on the wharf. But every effort to sell, here as elsewhere, showed the same resultant discouragement until at last I entered an office where I resolved to make a final attempt to save myself from the ignominy of a failure at the very

beginning of my business career. The dingy appointments of the office were unpromising enough. Rusty pens, clippings of paper, crumpled sheets crowded with figures, and stumps of pencils formed a unique carpet and almost hid the dirty plank floor. As if to contradict the suggestion of poverty, the solid walnut furniture raised its protest of neglect and here and there peered with brilliant glance through its dust labels, as if to assert that under proper treatment better things could be evolved from existing circumstances. I believe I could now draw a sketch of that room from memory. Bent over a sloping desk and intent upon a long list of figures, was a head whose masses of dark brown hair looked gray where the wan light of advancing age fell full upon it. The man, the sole occupant of the room, was carelessly dressed, and as he turned at the sound of my voice a preoccupied glance met mine. After listening with apparent interest to my business statement, he informed me that his name was Tracy, and that he would look at my oars. With a lightening heart I took him to my business location, and though he was remarkably silent during the walk, yet I was delighted to see that he was favorably impressed with my property. I began to think my purchase of some real value, and to wonder whether I had not been the victim of a hoax rather than a blunder; so when Mr. Tracy asked my price, I unblushingly told him he might have the lot for fifty dollars.

"That is too much," he said, mechanically, and as if his interest was waning.

"How much are you willing to give?" I ventured, feeling that my newly-awakened hopes had received their death-blow.

"I'll give you forty dollars," he replied, in the same even tone and without any variation of facial expression.

"They are certainly worth that much?" I could not prevent the question linking itself with the assertion, while I breathlessly awaited his answer.

"Oh! certainly, they are worth that much to me," was Mr. Tracy's reply, spoken with a weary air. And my conscience was salved in spite of the listless way in which the purchase was concluded. Returning to his office with him, he paid me cash, stowed away my receipt and dismissed me, all with the same perfunctory manner. I could not help feeling there had been something unreal about the whole thing, and I was afraid I would wake up to find it but one among the many strange dreams which had haunted me recently. However, the forty dollars in my pocket was tangible evidence of a good sale, and later that afternoon fact put fancy forever to flight when the oars were removed from our lumber pile to Mr. Tracy's, leaving in their wake happiness for me.

My mother was shocked when she heard of my bargain, said there must be some mistake about it, and that I must see Mr. Tracy the next morning and ask

him to reconsider. If he then still persisted in paying me such a price, I might keep the money with a clear conscience.

Early the next morning I was up and could not wait patiently the coming of business hours. On my way to the wharf I stopped at my uncle's office to pass away some of the laggard minutes, and found him deep in the morning paper. Spying me, he shouted, "Come here, Charlie, old boy, you've done it now. I told you those oars would row you into an undercurrent."

"What's the matter now?" I enquired, alarmed by his mocking yet serious tone.

"Matter enough, youngster. Here's the result of your work. Your Mr. Tracy used your oars to row himself beyond his depth. In common language, after being duped by you, he went home and blew his brains out."

"Oh! Uncle Tyce," I moaned, you've teased me enough about those things. Look here let's make a bargain"—

But my peace-making offer was never expounded, for my uncle interrupted, "none of your bargains for me, young man," adding as he tossed me the paper, "There read for yourself."

This paragraph met my eye: "Reginald Tracy, a large ship-owner, and controller of the pump-making agency, on the wharf, committed suicide yesterday evening by shooting himself through the head."

I must have waded through the half-column of that fearful tragedy, though I was not conscious of reading, for every detail seems vivid now, from the calibre of the pistol to the summoning of the coroner's jury. What the verdict might be I could not imagine, but in fancy I heard myself called a murderer, blackness of darkness seemed closing me in on every side, and out from the gloom emerged my victim's sad face full of reproach for me alone. As I laid the paper down and went out, perfect silence prevailed; not even my fun-loving uncle could find a remark appropriate to the occasion.

Home I went as rapidly as possible, the most miserable boy in the city, to pour out my woe to the one sympathetic heart—my mother's. But even she could only bid me wait for later information, though she would not tolerate the thought that my sale had any connection with the suicide. Not accepting the logic of her reasoning, I spent the day in my room brooding over the catastrophe. I felt I had taken advantage of a man's ignorance (though why he should not be a better judge of all kinds of lumber than I, was a mystery) and swindled him out of money. Afterward, discovering my trick, he had been driven to desperation by losing so much money! (Forty dollars meant much to me then.) In such musings the time passed, and when at twilight I heard my uncle's step upon the stair, I had closed the chapter of my earthly happiness

and believed that nothing but misery awaited me in the volume of days to come.

Uncle Tyce rapped at my door and with more gentleness than I had ever seen him exhibit, came up to me and said: "Well, Charlie, I bring you the verdict of the coroner's jury and it will be an intense relief to you."

"Oh! tell me," I cried eagerly, scarcely able to believe in any good news.

"Yes," he assured me, "the inquest developed the fact that for some weeks past, Mr. Tracy has been suffering from acute melancholia. You sold your oars to a crazy man!"

"Oh! Uncle Tyce, is it true?" This with a burst of tears which marked the transition from woe to joy.

"Yes, my boy, it is," my uncle said, and then he added slyly, partly to divert me and partly to gratify his fun-craving disposition, "but you know none but a lunatic would have bought them."

We then went down stairs together to join the household in a "family thanksgiving," as my mother called it.

Unprompted by any and to my dear, good mother's great satisfaction, I took the forty dollars back, a week later, to Mr. Tracy's son and heir, Harold Tracy, and gave him a full explanation of the whole affair. Strangely enough, either from a sentiment of delicacy

or from compassion for me, he refused to cancel his father's last business transaction.

Thus it happened, after much tribulation and the solving of some ethical problems, I doubled my money on my first investment.

KING AND QUEEN DAYS.

KING AND QUEEN DAYS.

THEY became enthusied at once and were among the first to hand in their names as members.

They thought it would be so easy to do just one kind act every day. Mrs. Estreway had been telling the children of the "Ministering League," and they were all very anxious to exercise the privilege and duties of membership. The family had gathered around the tea-table the evening following, when Madeleine, an impulsive girl just entering her teens, asked if they all had a kind deed with which to crown the day.

Charlie, two years older, said with an air of assumed humility:

"I think we had better keep our deeds for mamma's ears alone. We will grow conceited if we sit up in public and say what good things we have done."

"Charlie is right," said papa, "and his rule will include Agnes. But I think we may hear what Benny and Seeta have done without making them vain. Come, confess, little man, how have you kept your rule to-day?"

"I hepped Wanny put the buggy in the shed, and he gave me a cent, an' I held de stwainer 'hile Annie pou'd the milk in, but I didn' want her to dive me dat big tup o' milk either."

The elders laughed heartily at this evidently strategic choice of work, and Charlie said as they arose from the table, "That gives me an idea. The editor of the 'Weekly,' wants a type-setter; I think I'll go down and help him to-morrow."

The next day Agnes was quietly occupied when her mother came in and sat down to her sewing. Presently Agnes said, "Mamma, I am going to have my king and queen days."

"What do you mean, my daughter?" asked Mrs. Estreway, puzzled and interested. Agnes was only nine years old, but she was very bright and her ideas were natural and original.

"Why you know, mamma, everybody who is crowned is not necessarially a real king or queen. Poets used to be crowned, and warriors; and we have our own May Queen, and also our make-believe queens. I am going to try to have two days in the week on which my kind deeds will be so great and so many that they will make those two days royal, and I will call them my king and queen days."

Tears gathered in the mother's eyes, as she bent and kissed her sweet child, and commended heartily this beautiful fancy of her fertile brain.

The next day was Wednesday, and Mrs. Estreway was standing at the window watching the home coming of the school children. Far down the street she saw a child's form, which looked very much like her little Agnes, except that three or four large bundles almost obscured the figure and made her almost unrecognizable at such a distance. As the child turned down the first corner she came to, Mrs. Estreway felt she must have been deceived; but very much interested, she went out to the side entrance to see if the heavily laden little one should pass through the street below the house.

She had not long to wait, for soon the little form came again in view, and this time near enough to be identified as her own Agnes. But what could all those bundles mean? and where were her school-books? and she really was not coming home at all, but keeping straight on.

Ah! the mystery was explained when the mother saw the child was followed by a woman bent and old, who seemed to walk with great difficulty. Mrs. Estreway recognized her as a neighbor, living about two squares below, who seldom went abroad. Surely she was unusually feeble to-day.

When Agnes came home a half hour later her mother said, "my little girl is late to-day!"

"Yes, mamma, I carried some things home for old Mrs. Tomlinson. Do you know, mamma, I believe

she would have fallen down if I had not come along. She could hardly get home."

"Yes, dear, you did right," was the affectionate response.

Later Mrs. Estreway heard Agnes defending herself against the ridicule of some companions, who told her she looked like a silly guy with a lot of newspaper parcels strung around her and a horrid old woman for company.

Before tea Agnes had a run down to poor old Mrs. Tomlinson's to ask how she was. She came back to her mother with sparkling eyes to say that the old woman had said "the lift" had done her "lots of good and she'd rest a deal better that night, because her back wasn't so tired."

At the end of the next week Mrs. Estreway stumbled on Agnes' weekly memorandum, and as she thought of the burdened little figure trudging wearily down the street, the ridicule of associates and the special nutting expedition resigned, she was not surprised to find written opposite Wednesday in red ink, the words "Queen's Day."

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